WHAT IS WRONG WITH GERMANY?

WILLIAM HARBUTT DAWSON

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WILLIAM HARBUTT DAWSON

AUTHOR OF

"THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN GERMANY,"
"MUNICIPAL LIFE AND GOVERNMENT IN GERMANY," "GERMANY AND THE GERMANS,"
"INDUSTRIAL GERMANY," ETC. ETC

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INTRODUCTION

CLEAR proof of urgency is obligatory on anyone who ventures to add to the abundant literature which has been called forth already in this country by the European War. In justification of the present book I would rely less upon the strong feeling of compulsion which has prompted it than upon the fact that it is the outcome of an honest endeavour to get behind the visible and more obvious causes of the war and to bring to light the tendencies of national thought and policy—the *causæ causantes* —which had long been leading Germany directly towards this dismal catastrophe.

It will be seen that in pursuing my inquiries I have been at pains to let the Germans be, as far as possible, their own critics and accusers. In placing them in the witness-box against themselves, I have relied not upon the confused and frenzied talk of the present moment, when the Germans are saying so many things that they will one day wish to forget, but upon deliberate utterances of well-known writers and public men evoked by the normal controversies of normal times and intended only for home consumption. It would have been possible to have multiplied indefinitely this self-incriminating evidence had it not seemed judicious to confine the selection to quite recent years.

The book is intended, however, to serve a further object. Two special facts about Germany's recent conduct must have come as a shock to thousands of English people and Americans who, bringing to the study of German life and character both patient labour and open-hearted sympathy, had supposed that they had succeeded in entering to some extent into the national

mind and soul. One of these facts relates specially to the German Government, the other relates to the German people.

It is no exaggeration to say that the whole civilized world held its breath in sheer bewilderment when the German Imperial Chancellor, knowing that his country was determined to violate the Belgian treaty of neutrality, threw at the British Ambassador in Berlin the question, "Why should you make war on us for a scrap of paper?" Reduced to plain English, the question was a suggestion that because Germany for its own selfish advantage intended to cast honour to the winds, this country should feel bound to do the same.

Yet no less amazing, and in a sense even more disconcerting, was the impressive unanimity with which the German nation promptly endorsed the violent and lawless act of its rulers and proclaimed its refusal or inability to see in that act a wrong as wicked as any that has ever been committed in the name of a civilized community.

These two incidents revealed a political point of view, a national mentality and ethic, with which the world of the twentieth century had never reckoned, and, ever since, it has been taking stock of its preconceived ideas about Germany, eager to discern, in the light of a new experience, what contribution its gifted people are making to the culture and ideals of the present day. To help towards the study of that baffling enigma the psychology of a nation is my secondary purpose in writing this volume.

As I have traced one by one the tendencies which have culminated in the present war it has become increasingly plain to my own mind that there are three responsibilities —one of the Emperor, in having initiated dangerous developments of foreign policy and stimulated unreasoning imperialistic ambitions which later he was either unwilling or powerless to keep under control; one of the professional war party and the Chauvinists of all complexions, in having with unparalleled frivolity played for years with the idea of a European conflagration and accustomed the nation to the view that only by appeal

to the sword could Germany assert its rightful claims in the world; and one of the German people as a whole, in allowing themselves to be duped by their rulers, mesmerized and overborne by the war-makers, and eventually committed to a mad scheme of conquest on pretexts so hollow and insincere that their Government dare not subject them to the clear light of truth.

These responsibilities cannot, of course, be separated politically or morally; the whole German nation must bear the guilt of the war in common and expiate it in common; but we shall be the more capable of perceiving in their true relations the things that are wrong with Germany in proportion as we succeed, even in the heat and passion of the moment, in understanding the individual parts played by these three factors in bringing about the present catastrophe. I think I may also claim to have shown that all or nearly all the major follies and failures which have fallen to German foreign policy during the past twenty-five years are traceable to the abandonment of the safe and sagacious principles followed by Bismarck down to the close of his Chancellorship.

Out of the welter of conflicting opinions which the war has called forth one conviction emerges clearly and definitely—it is as strongly rooted in the public mind of autocratic Russia as in that of democratic America—and it is that this war and the will and power to wage it are the emanation of a spirit of militarism which pervades and dominates Germany as no other country and nation in the modern world. The recognition of this fact is helpful as a starting point, but it is still more important to know wherein the menace and the strength of militarism consist. Only when we are clear upon this further point can we justifiably indulge the hope of seeing Germany freed from this evil and demoralizing obsession. I believe that militarism is inseparable from the political conditions now prevailing in Germany, and that until these conditions are changed it will retain its hold and hence its appalling capacity for mischief. This view with its implications I have urged in the concluding chapter.

Burke said, "You cannot indict a nation," and it is

not amiss to recall the reminder at the present time. For when full recognition has been made of the fact that the German peoples are completely united in supporting their Sovereigns and Governments in the war, and with them must share responsibility to the full, it would not be true to say that war with our own country has been generally desired. Official Germany, military Germany, and to some extent financial and industrial Germany—in other words, the ruling classes—have long been bitterly hostile to us, but to the last there were large sections of the population which were earnestly endeavouring to bring about a good understanding between the two countries and contemplated the possibility of armed conflict with horror and dread. This holds good specially of the educated classes out of sympathy with the reactionary spirit of the German system of government, for these have ever looked to Great Britain for light and leading in political life, and still more of the working classes. It is obvious also that the many millions of German citizens resident in the Reichsland and in the disaffected provinces of Prussia—the Polish districts, Schleswig-Holstein, and old Hanover—cannot be regarded as our enemies save in a formal sense. It might even be added that with the populations of the Southern States generally English people can never be wholly out of sympathy.

For present purposes such a distinction between the constitutionally hostile and the naturally friendly elements in the German nation is of little consequence, but, looking to the future, it is important to know how far the nation may be expected to stand together in the event of proposals being made at the settlement which, on the one hand, would weaken the position of Prussia, as the centre of mischief, and on the other hand would transform the system of government which has made the whole people the sport and victim of a military despotism. Those who are convinced that the questions of paramount importance are the questions which will arise when the armies of the Allies have completed their work can have no interest in assuming the German nation to be more

generally or more irrevocably hostile to us than is really the case.

Meanwhile the war which it has so criminally provoked must be continued until the Allies are able to enforce terms of peace. For the German nation in its present mood, did it but know, success would be an infinitely greater misfortune than defeat, since victory would seem to sanctify force and justify the spirit of arrogance and aggression which has led Germany to break treaties, to trample underfoot the rights of small States, and to defy the moral sense of the world. On the other hand, for Europe Germany's success would mean a condition of political anarchy and moral chaos, followed by a speedy second deluge of blood; for the world at large, the shattering of many of the inspiring hopes and visions which have strengthened the courage and kept alive the faith of the pathfinders of human progress.

This preface must end on a melancholy note. This is the first book upon Germany which I have written without pleasure. Had I not believed that it would serve a patriotic purpose I should have shrunk from the mental struggle which the effort has cost me. It is no light matter for one who has sincerely striven during many of the best years of his life to help forward the reconciliation of two great nations, to have to confess the failure of effort and aim and to add his own "Vanity of vanities!" to the long and saddening record of disillusionment and disappointment, of unfulfilled hopes and shattered faith. It is wise, however, to face the facts. As that sanest of Englishmen, Bishop Wilson of Man, wrote, "Things are as they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be; why, therefore, should we deceive ourselves?" Whatever else the future may have in store, it is certain that, if civilization is not to mark time, the war will create new relationships and loyalties between European nations, and that our own country in particular, in carrying on its special mission in the world, will be compelled henceforth and for a long time to work hand in hand with associates and comrades whose national and cultural ideals are nearer to its own

than are those of Germany as they have been revealed by recent events.

If I were to choose a motto for this book, none would be more fitting than the following words, written by one who, besides being a profound student of human nature, was also in his way a political moralist; certainly none could more truly describe the issues involved in the present war:

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

BECKENHAM, KENT,
December 1, 1914.

CHAPTER I

THE OLD AND THE NEW CULTURE

WHAT is wrong with Germany to-day? It is painfully evident that many things are wrong, yet all are covered by the broad statement that Germany is out of harmony with the rest of the world. It would appear that the modern German view of life has proved fallacious, and the German attitude towards mankind at large a miscalculation. The fallacy and the miscalculation have long been suspected by observers who have studied Germany from the outside, and also by many German observers, even more critical, who have studied tendencies of national life from within, and the events of the past few months have given to the current impression weighty and startling confirmation.

But merely to affirm the widely prevalent conviction that Germany's national life has been thrown out of balance is not to give an explanation of the fact itself, and what the world which is looking on while Germany is helping to make history, and, as the world hopes, is preparing the way for its own reformation, wonders and wants to know is, How comes it that this great nation, with so notable a record of worth and achievement in the most various departments of life behind it, is to-day stamped by its own acts and by the judgment of well-nigh all mankind as a disturbing, a hostile, almost an alien, element in the concert of human civilization?

I. THE NEW EMPIRE AND THE NEW SPIRIT

If we would arrive at a satisfactory explanation of this strange and disconcerting spectacle we must seek it

first, as we must seek the explanation of so many other notable facts in the present life of Germany, in the political history of the past half-century, and the transformation in the national spirit and ideals which has occurred during that period—a period more fateful for Germany and, through Germany's influence, for the world than any since the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

It is necessary first to recall the fact that even up to the middle of last century Germany was still little more than a geographical expression. The old Empire—the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation—had been dissolved at the beginning of the century at the bidding of Napoleon, but after Napoleon's fall had given place in 1815 to a loose union of States, with the name Deutscher Bund, or Germanic Confederation, which continued in form, though not in reality, the union it had supplanted. The mouthpiece of this Confederation was the Diet of Frankfort, a body formed of delegates of the federated Princes, yet possessed of few powers and little authority. All the States so united retained the old independent sovereignty, and were free to go their own way as before; but two States competed for practical hegemony—Austria and Prussia.

The Danish war of 1864 and the Bohemian war of 1866 settled this question in Prussia's favour. Austria was thrust out of Germany and the Bund was dissolved. All obstacles being removed out of Prussia's path, its task was now simply to work straight on towards the goal of its ambitions—the leadership of the entire Germanic race. Gathering round it the States north of the Main, Prussia formed the North German Confederation. The States of the South still remained true to their old attachment to Austria, and for a time held aloof. Prussia was finally elevated to the leadership of all the German States forming the present union after the French war of 1870–1871. In the latter year the German Empire, composed of twenty-six States (two being Free Cities), with the Prussian King as hereditary German Emperor, began its career amid circumstances of favourable augury and with the goodwill of almost the whole world.

A new and virile influence now entered into German national life, or rather an old influence began to exert itself under new and more favourable conditions. This was the influence of the Prussian spirit, which in its various manifestations has more than anything else transformed the Germany of the past and given to it a new, though not a higher, culture. This spirit has ever been a hard and immalleable element in the life of Germanism; it is still the knot in the oak, the nodule in the softer clay. It was on Prussia, as a "rock of bronze," that Frederick the Great built his unique system of militarism. Now the spirit of the northern State, whose civilization, as it was younger than that of the West and South, lacked also its refinement and suavity, was to assert itself in an irresistible form, its intrinsic strength reinforced by all the advantages derived from Prussia's constitutional position at the head of the Confederation.

The Empire had not been established long before the new wine of success turned the head of a nation unaccustomed to that beverage of kings. Military prowess, the political prestige resulting from it, and the millions of the French indemnity between them demoralized the sober nation which had been lifted by one sudden stroke of fortune from a position of impotence and inferiority to one of commanding importance. In the course of the two succeeding decades Germany rebuilt its towns, established great industries, covered the land with factories, multiplied its mercantile fleet, created a great colonial empire, and above all became immensely rich. Either the pride of military power or the enervating influence of material prosperity might alone have threatened the moral balance of a young and ardent nation; here both dangers were conjoined, and together they threw Germany out of gear. Once the delicate mechanism of the national mind and life became dislocated, however, the disturbance almost necessarily went from bad to worse.

Exactly that happened which might have been expected. Germany had suddenly become a great nation, and it was not slow to form great opinions of itself; but

it made the mistake of expecting that the world would, as a matter of course, accept it at its own valuation. This the world declined to do. It was willing to recognize the change in Germany's position, and to concede its right to a much higher place at the council table of the nations than heretofore, but it was not ready to admit that because Germany had been last before it should henceforth be first. It accepted a "Deutschland" gladly, but not a "Deutschland über Alles," and Germany would be contented with nothing less. Its arrogance was largely a reaction against the humiliations which the Germans had undergone at the hands of other nations so long as their countries were disunited and weak and their name was held politically in low repute.

The endeavour to turn the tables upon its former oppressors was natural, very human, and within limits excusable. Unfortunately the more the attempt was resented the more Germany persisted in it. In those early years the seeds were sown of discords which have since steadily increased.

Reviewing the tendencies indicated above, Professor Karl Lamprecht, the historian, wrote some years ago :

"A Chauvinism arose which was prepared to regard the nation as the only chosen one on earth, and the individual manifestations of which were crystallized in an attitude which the French well described as *grossièreté allemande*. This in general terms is the psychological position to-day—a firm national instinct which will never fail in critical moments, yet fluctuating between excessive and deficient self-assertiveness. It is obvious that this instability cannot be easily cured ; mere reasoning will not do it. Only by degrees can it give place to a well-balanced, confident sense of national self-appreciation ; time is required for that."

But the temper which to this hopeful writer seemed temporary and transient has since been confirmed and become chronic. Germany has had over forty years in which to adjust itself to its proper "place in the sun," and the longer it lives the more it wants all the room for itself. The claims made in the early days were unassum-

ingly modest in comparison with those which have been made on its behalf by the present Emperor and the professors and publicists who so zealously expound his ambitions. To the Emperor the German people is "the granite block on which the good God will complete His work of civilizing the world"; and "just as Jesus Christ called His disciples, so the German nation is now called to be the salt of the earth," though the Emperor has never explained how he comes to know this. In the same spirit, General von Bernhardi, in a book fuller of national arrogance as well as political immorality than any book of modern times, speaks of the German people as "the greatest civilized people known to history," and tells us that "the proud conviction forces itself upon us with irresistible power that a high, if not the highest, importance for the entire development of the human race is ascribable to the German people."* "Our Emperor, our Chancellor, our leading men, like our people, have no equals," was written more recently by Dr. A. Lasson, the octogenarian Berlin Professor of Philosophy. "We are the freest people of the earth. Our might is the might of the spirit. Humaneness, gentleness, conscientiousness, Christianity are our distinguishing marks." Sentiments of the same kind might be multiplied to the point of weariness. The German claim in a word is, "We are the people, and wisdom shall die with us."

There have also been outside flatterers who have encouraged in the German mind this exalted idea of superiority. In a letter which I recently received from a professor belonging to one of the great universities of the United States occurs the passage: "Several of our American 'exchange' professors at the University of Berlin, who have dined with the Emperor, have come home with their republicanism sadly out of repair and their views irrevocably warped." However that may be, one may wonder whether the first of the American "exchange" professors did a real service to the cause of

* "Germany and the Next War," from the English translation of which this and later quotations from Bernhardi are taken.

culture, which is an interest not of Germany and America only but of all the world, when at the junketings which accompanied his leave-taking at Berlin (May 2, 1907) he said: "We Germans and Americans belong together as the two great civilizing, progressive nations of the present and future. We have the same conscientiousness, the same sense of justice, an equal spirit of self-control, the same idealism associated with sound practical sense, the same cordial reciprocity, and the same juvenile freshness and sanguine spirit of enterprise. I regard it as indubitable that the welfare of the two hemispheres is bound up in a higher degree with the destiny of our two nations than with that of all others together."

Wise men seldom commit themselves to confident forecasts of world history, and the events now occurring seem likely to discredit this special attempt at prophecy so far as Germany is concerned. One may doubt, however, whether such gross adulation was the special tonic needed by Germany in its existing mood of self-esteem and self-sufficiency.

If one may accept the testimony of a whole literature of panegyric, from the inoffensive enthusiasm of the mild patriot who is merely concerned that Germans abroad shall not lose their language to the fantastic Chauvinism of the Pan-German, who dreams of a vast Germanic dominion, which will leave very few lands or races outside its borders, the German nation is profoundly convinced that it leads the whole world in culture.* There is something grotesque in the ardour with which Germany protests its culture and in the means which it uses for impressing other nations with its own assurance on the subject. In private life it never occurs to the cultured man or woman to parade the fact of their culture;

* It may be argued that German "Kultur" and English "culture" are not in all respects identical, since the German word is often used to connote the broader idea of "civilization." Inasmuch, however, as "Kultur" is also used to express the meaning of "culture" ("Bildung" is similarly used, though it, too, is ambiguous), there seems no reason to distinguish between the two words.

if the culture is there it speaks for itself, and the world appreciates it all the more for its reticence. German culture and its superiority are proclaimed by all the devices of the advertising agent and the bellman. Not only so, but Germany has persuaded itself that it has a special mission, bestowed upon it by Providence, to impose its superior culture on the rest of mankind. It would be impossible to credit this preposterous idea were it not boastfully avowed in words which leave no room for doubt.

"Germany *means* culture," says the Emperor William II. "We must mould the entire mechanism of modern civilization, *as it ought to be*, in German form," says an exponent of the Emperor's views.* "We must enshrine this gigantic clockwork in a case of German gold bearing the seal of our own individuality."

The prime error underlying such a pretension, that of supposing that culture can be imposed upon any nation like laws and police regulations, by a will outside itself, does not trouble the apostles of this strange new gospel. Nor have they given due attention to the obvious duty of proving the special attractiveness of the culture which they represent. The culture of even the most enlightened of nations has only a relative value. Speaking of his own Germany, Goethe said, less than a century ago, that its culture was still in a bad way, and that he would be contented if after a few hundred years it could be said of his countrymen, "They have ceased to be barbarians." † Possibly Goethe might have stipulated for a thousand years in the case of Englishmen, whose enlightenment in general does not appear to have greatly impressed him. But that is not a matter of importance, for we do not presume to provide the whole world with culture. For the present we are trying to get culture ourselves, accepting it whencesoever we may, and glad to take all that even Germany can give us, which at the moment is not as much as it used to be. But with

* Georg Fuchs, "Der Kaiser und die Zukunft des deutschen Volkes."

† Conversation with Eckermann, 1827.

the Germans it is different, for they are not only satisfied that their country is the special home of culture, but they are determined that all the world shall receive this unique gift at their hands, at the bayonet's point if need be. As the Erlkönig says to the hesitant child in Goethe's poem, " But be not unwilling, for then I'll use force ! "

The culture of a nation must not be judged merely by its education, for it means far more than this. It includes its entire mentality and morality, its ideals and beliefs, its spirit and temper, its institutions and customs, and, not least, its attitude towards other nations and towards that universal culture of which its own is but a fragment. Therefore, before accepting the proffered German gift of culture, the world has a right to know exactly what the gift is and what its value. In the following chapters an endeavour is made to arrive at a judgment upon German culture from this standpoint, but a few preliminary observations will assist us in our task.

II. The Reaction against the Old Idealism

Let us be clear at the outset that the German culture of to-day is a very different thing from the culture of old Germany. That Germany and its culture are for practical purposes dead. The German nation possesses splendid qualities and capacities which, whenever they have been rightly employed, have rendered invaluable service for mankind. But the special contributions which it is making to the thought and ideals of the modern world are not those which made its name revered and its influence gracious and helpful in the past. Nor for obvious reasons have these contributions anywhere evoked the old ready response. Modern Germany has an art, a public and domestic architecture, a literature, a theology, a materialistic philosophy, a Socialist creed, a State conception, a military system, and of late a political ethic of its own, and the world has hitherto refused to accept any one of them. It is a hard truth, yet there is scarcely a single department of human thought or life in which the genius and individuality of modern Germany find dignified expression.

Looking back towards the end of his life, a decade after the emancipation era had ushered in a period of reaction, Goethe complained that the wars of the beginning of last century " stirred the will more than the intellect." Later tendencies altogether confirmed the truth of this verdict. The idealism which the nineteenth century inherited from the eighteenth succumbed beneath the pressure of political movements, and its final extinction came when the era of military conquest opened in the middle of the century, when Prussia at last gained the upper hand, and the Prussian spirit gradually became supreme.

Nevertheless, all the time this transformation was in progress Germany knew better and was conscious that it was bartering away its most precious spiritual inheritance. For its modern materialism and its ambition to dominate in virtue of material superiority are not in the true spirit and tradition of German life.

A glance at the tendencies which were still uppermost when last century opened will make this fact clear; for present purposes it is not necessary to go further back. The brilliant military successes of Frederick the Great heralded a new era in the history not only of Prussia but of Germany. To this era belonged the classical period of German philosophy and learning, poetry and music. Satiated with military exploits and political feuds, Germany turned with relief to intellectual pursuits, satisfied if it might henceforth assert a leadership in affairs of the mind, and willing to leave material conquests to the rest of the world. That supremacy was asserted, and the world received it with gratitude. Germany stood in those days for a culture which was not proud, was not puffed up, did not behave itself unseemly, and which, instead of creating discord and rivalry in the world, made for harmony and friendly emulation. The fifty years intervening between the close of the Seven Years' War, which secured the stability of Frederick's monarchy, and the fall of Napoleon, with the concurrent regeneration of Prussia, produced a galaxy of figures great in the history of thought. In philosophy there were Kant, Herder, Fichte, and Hegel; in poetry,

Wieland, Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe. It was the classical period of German idealism, and German intellectual history has never known one more brilliant.

But the influences which moved German thought in those days find little echo in the Germany and the German culture of to-day. Schiller claimed that it was the national mission of the German "to place at the disposal of the world his idealism, his poetry and thought, and to dominate it in this department by a service devoid of all ulterior designs." Yet it is Schiller more than any other German thinker whose teaching, ideals, and spirit have been forgotten in recent years—his enthusiasm for liberty, his passion for justice, his exaltation of individuality and manhood, his hatred of all oppression, sordidness, and materialism.

One of the ablest of contemporary German literary critics, Ludwig Fulda, wrote not long ago:

"The change which has taken place within the last four decades to the prejudice of Schiller corresponds to and proceeds from a change in the entire spirit of the age. An extraordinary transformation has taken place in the intellectual life of Germany in politics, culture, and art, and it is easy to see how the new conditions and views in each of these domains unfavourably affect the appreciation of Schiller. In the Germany of to-day, which owes its great material deeds to its extraordinary development, everything which can with any justification be described as 'real,' reality, or realism has a market value due to the respect in which it is held. Woe to everything, however, which bears the impress of idealism, for it is regarded as a relic of the epoch of political impotence, of the time when the Germans were as idealistic as the poet who came last at the division of the world." *

"Who are the men whom the Germans love most ardently?" asked Medical Councillor Dr. W. Fuchs in an article in *Die Post* of January 28, 1912, advocating war at once, and he answered, "Goethe, Schiller, Wagner, Marx? Oh, no! but rather Barbarossa, Frederick the Great, Blücher, Moltke, and Bismarck, the hard men of

* "Schiller und die neue Generation."

blood. It is to these men, who sacrificed thousands of lives, that the soul of the nation sends out its tenderest feelings and a truly adoring gratitude, because they did what we should do to-day."

Modern German culture is supposed to have been greatly influenced by Nietzsche, and a German interpreter of that philosopher boldly claims that he is "the embodiment of all the cultural endeavours which dominate our time." Much of Nietzsche's teaching undoubtedly runs parallel with the materialistic thought of modern Germany, yet it is questionable whether he has exerted great immediate influence upon the minds which give direction to the national life. It is difficult to estimate the influence of any original thinker upon his generation, and in the case of Nietzsche the difficulty becomes almost insuperable, since there were two periods in his intellectual development, and in the later period he revised and reversed some of his earlier teaching.

The normal educated German is disposed to regard Nietzsche as milk for babes rather than strong meat for men. Ask him "What is the effect of Nietzsche's teaching upon the people?" and most likely the reply will be, "He influences only the young." "But," you may say, "the young grow up and become old." "They outlive Nietzsche," will be your answer. And it is probable that this statement of the limitations of Nietzsche's influence is substantially true. Nietzscheism, with its exaltation of rebellion, its crude atheism, its negation of morality, its contempt for order, could not well make a strong appeal to ripe manhood and womanhood. The uncanny satirist and cynic whose whole life was a struggle with illness both of body and mind, and who said, "I made my philosophy out of my will to be healthy, to live," has a fascination for a certain type of German character at a certain stage of development, and as a rule the stage is that of immaturity, but when this stage has passed, the glamour of his confused and paradoxical gospel vanishes. Nietzscheism and the hard facts of life are ill-mated consorts. It is certain, however, that Nietzsche's influence, so

long as it lasts, proves destructive of the old idealism, and leaves no room for Schiller amongst the enthusiasms and heroisms of youth.

The address of the German philosophers and professors in defence of their country's attitude in the present war reminds the world that Germany is the home of the great leaders of thought, the aristocrats of the mind and spirit, who have been named above. What the philosophers and professors have omitted to tell us is that they themselves have forsaken the teaching of these men, and that the ideals which Germany is to-day endeavouring to force upon the world are not their ideals at all. A hundred years ago the philosophers and professors of Germany were preaching the categorical imperatives of duty, fidelity to conscience, and moral obligation; they proclaimed the ideal of universal brotherhood and a patriotism whose truth and dignity were to be proved by respect for the rights of other nations. The German philosophers and professors of to-day preach the blessings of *Realpolitik*, justify wars of aggression, act as political agents for the propagation of aggressive militarism and marinism, defend the violation of treaties, and give their deliberate sanction to the doctrine that acts of violence and perfidy committed upon small States by a German Government are right if they seem necessary to selfish national advantage. A military essayist like General von Bernhardi has impiously dared to use Goethe's noble apostrophe, "Only he deserves freedom and life who is compelled to conquer them daily," as a justification of a national policy of territorial aggrandisement!

III. The Modern Worship of Force

Enough, however, of the past, for that, for Germany and all of us, is now a closed book—a book sealed with seven seals which no living German idealist seems even wishful to reopen. We are more concerned with Germany as we find it to-day, materialized and militarized, Germany as Prussia has made it, Germany after it has passed out of the mould of a spirit inflexible and masterful, after

it has put away as childish things the earlier ideals that once were its passion and its glory, that gave it happiness even if they did not give it wealth, and spiritual influence even if they did not give it material power. For while it is essentially the Prussian spirit which has made Germany to so large a degree unsympathetic to the modern world, the nation as a whole has imbibed this spirit far more than it knows, and certainly more than it would like to think.

This Prussianized Germany incarnates power and force, its culture is a materialistic culture, its spirit is the spirit of subdual and mastery, and its ambition is conquest and domination. In a book written seven years ago I called attention to the alarming growth of "force worship" in modern Germany and to some of its most sinister expressions, and no apology can be needed for recalling some of the words then used.*

"The struggle," it was there said, "to which Germany has since 1860 devoted its undivided strength is not a struggle waged consciously in the name and for the sake of civilization, but a struggle for sheer mastery in the realm of matter and for political ascendancy amongst the nations. Yet if Germany should ultimately gain all the material success and political power it aspires after, no one will dare to say that it will mean more for civilization and the world than the weak and disjointed Germany of a century ago, which gave to mankind the Goethe and Schiller, the Kant and Fichte, whose teachings have for the time been cast aside.

"The effect of this worship of material force is seen in the elevation of the State to a position of importance which it never held before, in the multiplication of its functions and the centralization of authority, without any corresponding increase of national control. It is seen pre-eminently in the huge army which Germany has created, and which represents the cult of force in its most universal form, since the army on its modern basis is to all intents and purposes the nation. It is the wish for more power which also lies at the root of the agitation for

* "The Evolution of Modern Germany."

a navy which may be a fit complement to an invulnerable land force. The same tendency is seen in the bitter struggles of parliamentary parties and in the absence of balance and of a spirit of compromise and accommodation which they show. It is seen no less in the economic struggle, between capital and labour in general, and in a narrower sense between the industrialists and the agrarians —a struggle probably fiercer than in any other country and likely yet to become more vehement before any conciliation of the contending interests will be possible.

"There is, indeed, a large element of Romanism in modern Germany, in its megalomania, its fondness of massiveness, its restless hankering after great effects, its exaltation of machinery and systems. These characteristics may be summarized in the phrase 'force-worship.' . . . In all these things the underlying thought is the thought of subdual, and subdual is the spirit of modern Germany, still in the first blush of a new life, its capacities still but partially developed, its resources but partially discovered. Yet, for all this, it is questionable whether unified Germany counts as much to-day as an intellectual and moral agent in the world as when it was little better than a geographical expression, and the reason is that for the present its strength is not the strength of a nation that lives by and for ideals. Germany has at command an apparently inexhaustible reserve of physical and material force, but the real influence which it exerts is disproportionately small. The history of civilization is full of proofs that the two things are not synonymous. A nation's mere force is on ultimate analysis its sum of brute strength. This force may, indeed, go with intrinsic power, yet such power can never permanently depend on force, and the test is easy to apply—what remains of influence when the force is removed? Rome ruled by force, and when the legions went Rome went, too. Greece lacked Rome's material force, but by power of intellect and ideals it ruled where the legions were impotent, and Rome itself passed beneath its sway.

"The analogy seems to apply with singular appositeness to Germany. Half a century ago it might have seemed as

though it had still been open to Germany to choose whether it would play the part of a Greece or a Rome in modern civilization. For the present, the assertion of modern Germanism is the assertion of material force, and it remains yet to be seen whether there is behind a spiritual influence that will permeate society and so become a constructive factor in civilization."

If what has been said correctly describes the influences which to-day are contending for, if they have not already obtained, ascendancy in Germany, light will be thrown on phases of German life and character which otherwise might seem difficult to understand. It is the domination of the force-cult which explains why Germany, which succeeds so brilliantly in governing material forces, fails so lamentably in governing spiritual forces. So far as command over matter goes, the German is not merely good, but unapproachable. Any work, any function that can be performed by system, he will perform as no other man on earth. His machinery will not always be the best, but in its own way it will work to perfection and the finished product will be the best of its kind—that is, the best that such machinery can produce. When, however, it comes to working with human material, the German system breaks down, for here machine-work is of little value. That is why Germany, which excels so conspicuously in town government, does not succeed in the government of men. That is why the German systems of education, which are incomparable so far as their purpose is the production of scholars and teachers, or of officials and functionaries, to move the cranks, turn the screws, gear the pulleys, and oil the wheels of the complicated national machinery, are far from being equally successful in the making of all-round men. And Germany knows this—that is, the Germany which does not work the machinery, but submits to its pressure, or looks on while others submit. Hence the discontent of the enlightened classes with the political laws under which they live—a discontent often vague and indefinite, the discontent of men who do not know clearly what is wrong or what they want, but feel that a

free play is denied them which belongs to the dignity and worth and essence of human personality.

Germany, it has been said, does not excel in the government of men, and it is important to keep in mind this defect at a time when Germany's ambitions are turned towards territorial conquest. Because the spirit of German rule is mechanical and masterful, it is not assimilative, and this fact has been abundantly shown in the relationship of Prussia to the non-German races within the monarchy and the Empire. Schiller said that "the noblest sign of culture is respect for other people's liberty" ("Das vornehmste Zeichen der Bildung ist fremde Freiheit zu schonen"). Prussian culture has never borne that sign. On the contrary, it has been consistently unsympathetic, unaccommodating, and intolerant. This may be seen not only in a far from creditable record of colonial administrative failure, but in the failure to conciliate the non-German races in the German Empire itself. The treatment of these races has been at all times ungenerous, often it has been vindictive, and the only effect has been to create increased estrangement. Try as it will, Prussia fails to impose the impress of its culture upon either Pole or Dane or Frenchman, and so long as the Prussian spirit remains unchanged, this failure will continue to the end of the chapter. No one would contend, for example, that the so-called "Germanization" of the Polish provinces of Prussia which has been in progress for over a century has made the slightest impression on the Polish character. The "nationalization" movement simply means the forcible repression of the individuality of the subject race, and not the diffusion in that race of a new and higher culture. Were the Polish provinces to be abandoned, it would be found that no trace of German intellectual or moral influence would remain. Where in the past Prussian culture did supplant Slavic culture in the territories stretching from the Vistula to the Elbe, it was not by a process of assimilation, but by outright suppression and extinction.

A German writer, Dr. Paul Rohrbach, laments the untoward influence of this Prussian spirit of intolerance

upon independent races with which it is Germany's interest to be friendly. He writes:

"The regrettably deep alienation between us and our nearest relatives, the Swiss and the Dutch, is attributable to our small capacity as moral conquerors, and it is specially the North German spirit which is open to the reproach that it is not in a position to cultivate a frank appreciation of the individuality of another nation and friendly relationship with people of a different type. This weakness has its roots in the note of bluntness in intercourse which, originating in Prussia, has gradually gained a wider influence on the entire German character. . . . Behind the cool and deliberate manner of the English gentleman there is real strength and a well-balanced consciousness of national dignity of character; behind the German bluntness there is too often nothing more than empty class pride and ignorant indifference to the ideal obligations of nationality." *

Though Germany is learned and scholarly to the point of oppressiveness, the national spirit suffers from want of equilibrium, from crudeness and angularity. Far from this being the result of any lack of education, the Germans have perhaps had too much education, but it has been education of the wrong sort. English education may be defective, but at least it is education, in that it makes for the formation of character and encourages the development of individuality. In refusing to give the State a free hand in the organization and control of our universities and our medley of higher and secondary schools, we have sacrificed educational thoroughness and have failed as yet to humanize the middle class as a whole, but our educational system has hitherto seemed to produce a sufficiency of just that sort of capacity which our special national mission has needed. Germany has reserved education as a peculiar domain of State action, and in this domain the national fetishes of uniformity and correctness have been rigorously applied just where they are of least value. The reflective Prince Hohenlohe, while still at the threshold of manhood, regretted that he

* "Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt."

had been brought up amid rigid restraints and compulsions that left his mind and character little room for expansion, and professed the wish that he had been allowed to " gang his ain gait," even if it had taken him to the devil for a time, for he was sure that, like Faust, he would have found his soul again and would have been worth more as a man for the temporary lapse.

The German mind would have been much more flexible and gracious if the nation had, metaphorically speaking, undergone the discipline of the public school. English insularity is still far more common than is good for culture, but our insularity has at least the justification that Providence ordained it. Germany is set in the midst of a continent, exposed to the stimulating influences of French suavity and *esprit* on one side and Slavic idealism and mysticism on the other, yet its dominant temper remains hard and brittle and its culture now, as in Goethe's day, is local.

It is a local culture because it is essentially the culture of a nation which has accepted militarism as the foundation and spirit of its national life. Inspired and led by Prussia, Germany has staked its whole existence, its present and its future, on military power. It has committed the fatuous error of those other empires of the past which put their whole trust in armies, forgetting that there are higher and more lasting values than brute force, and that in the great struggles of races and civilizations success has not always and never permanently gone to the strong battalions, but that on a long view spiritual " fitness " has proved an even more important factor in national progress than physical " fitness." Yet there are German writers in abundance who glory in the assertion of militarism and are contented that Germany's title to recognition and its place in the world shall be justified by its military strength and prowess alone.

" We Germans," says such a writer, " have a characteristic form of culture in nothing at all *except as soldiers.*" " The German nation owes its present position as a European Power to the only form of culture which it

has yet created, its army. It will need to assert itself as an international Power by a similar manifestation or disappear dishonourably." "The army is the only great organism of culture comprising the entire nation which we possess."*

Not only is the claim of a merely military pre-eminence put forward as a convincing proof of Germany's right to dominate the rest of the world, but the writers who talk in this strain are honest enough to give the world fair notice that this domination is to be achieved by war. Germany has been disappointed in the past that, do what it would, it has been impossible to impress upon the world any definite national stamp of its own. Now it has awakened to the belief that its failure has been due to over-modesty; it has not asserted itself sufficiently. Henceforth war is to win for Germany the victories denied by peace. Culture is to be used as a rod wherewith to chastise the barbarians.

We may smile at the vanity of this ambition as something puerile and immature, or wonder at the moral perversity which prompts it, but we shall be unwise to ignore it, for its existence is attested by a large literature, written by no means altogether by irresponsible men. Thus Bernhardi, a man as free as any from mere patriotic gush, and by no means given to fantastic castle-building in the air, writes:

"We ourselves have become conscious of being a powerful as well as a necessary factor in the development of mankind. This knowledge imposes on us the obligations of asserting our mental and moral influence as much as possible, and of paving the way everywhere in the world for German labour and German idealism. But we can only carry out successfully these supreme civilizing tasks if our humanizing efforts are accompanied and supported by increasing political power."

Similar passages might be quoted without number from the same writer. For example:

"Germany has great national and historical duties of policy and culture to fulfil, and its path towards further

* G. Fuchs, "Der Kaiser und die Zukunft des deutschen Volkes."

progress is threatened by formidable enemies. If we realize this we shall see that it will be impossible to maintain our present position and secure our future without an appeal to arms."

"The dominion of German thought can only be extended under the ægis of political power, and unless we act in conformity with this idea we shall be untrue to our great duties towards the human race."

To instance a still earlier exponent of the same doctrine, the essayist Georg Fuchs writes: "War is the price of culture. As the civilizations of the future, though in their inner origin national geographically, will and must be international, the purchase price for future culture is international war." Again: "Wherever the highest culture is found the highest military efficiency will be seen to be its complement. All culture is bought at the price of blood, since it is nothing less than the relentless expression by a nation of its own personality."

This, then, is the conception of German culture and its mission as expounded by many of the most popular writers of the day and as lately endorsed by the military party which has dragged half the world into the bloodiest struggle of history. Germany stands forth, on its own confession, as the representative of national and social conceptions, ideals, and aims which are entirely alien to those pursued by other civilized nations. Its culture is a tribal culture based on force, yet it seeks to impose this culture on mankind for mankind's benefit. German national life has been perverted into an immense egoism which views the whole world as an arena for sordid ambitions and giddy conquests which, if realized, would throw back civilization and in the end compel mankind to do much of its work over again. Germany is still, in fact, in the fighting stage of human development, a stage in which every man's hand is against his neighbour. A country with such ideals is a menace not only to Europe but to the world at large.

Goethe at the close of his life believed with Niebuhr that a barbarous age was coming. That age has been coming for Germany ever since, in the middle of last

century, its statesmen and Governments finally parted company with the old idealism and prepared the way for the modern Imperialism. May it not be said in the year of the Great War that it has now fully arrived? Materialism may corrupt the moral life of a nation just as much as militarism, but Germany suffers from both. The struggle between the spirit created by these twin influences and the moral forces which Germany inherited from its great past has been long and fierce. For the present the powers of darkness appear to have gained the upper hand.

But yesterday the word of Germany was good currency accepted throughout the world. To-day no nation would honour it. That is bad enough, but worse still is the fact that Germany justifies international perfidy and the rule of might as its right, and cannot understand why other countries should object. It is clear that for Germany the vital issue of the war is not whether it shall levy or pay an indemnity, shall gain or lose territory, but whether the victory of the force spirit and its brutalizing tendencies shall be complete and so far as this generation, if not this new century, is concerned be permanent.

CHAPTER II

TREITSCHKE AND "THE STATE AS POWER"

I. The Prusso-German State

It seemed necessary, in beginning our inquiry into the things that are wrong with Germany, to call attention to some of the marks of modern German culture, since one of these things is Germany's determination to force its culture on the rest of the world. Certain reasons have been given to account for the materialism of this culture and for the aggressive attitude which Germany has for some years adopted towards other countries. They do not explain, however, how it comes about that a whole nation can be carried with evident enthusiasm into a war which it professes to regard as just, yet which all other nations regard as unjust; which it proclaims to be a war for culture, and they a war against culture.

For there is little justification for believing that the war or any of the events which preceded it have seriously divided public opinion in Germany, but on the contrary great justification for the assumption that the nation, whether it understands its own mind or not, stands behind its Government as one man. Even the violent invasion of Belgium in violation of treaty pledges, far from having aroused in Germany any qualms of conscience, has been applauded as a masterly military feat. In reporting the German Chancellor's defence of this act in the Reichstag on August 4, and his declaration that Germany had only to think of "how best to hack its way through," the *Vossische Zeitung* of Berlin added the very significant information that these words evoked "stormy applause and repeated clapping of hands throughout the whole

House and the galleries," and as if to emphasize this unequivocal approval of an act of violence and lawlessness the journal said in another place, "The jubilation which greeted these words baffles description. One man spoke here in the name of the nation." * It is impossible to mistake the temper attested by this incident.

It is evident that we have to do with one of those strange and widespread moral lapses into which nations, altogether normal in their domestic relationships, from time to time fall in their dealings with other peoples. The question at issue is a question of national psychology, and in trying to understand such a question it is a safe rule to assume that the easiest and apparently most natural explanations are in all probability wrong. Human nature seldom reveals its secrets to superficial search, and in this case the enigma offered by human nature is unusually complex.

* It may be necessary hereafter, when all the facts are known, to admit a reservation in the case of the Socialists. This party—the largest in the House both in electoral strength and in number of seats—while voting the credits demanded by the Government, disclaimed responsibility for the war and expressly declined to pronounce either for or against the events which have produced it. In a collective statement read on behalf of the party by Deputy Haase on August 4, in reply to the Government's appeal for national unity and for the supplies needed for the war, they stated:

"The consequences of the imperialistic policy which brought about an era of rivalry in armaments and accentuated the antagonisms between the nations have broken over Europe like a deluge. The responsibility for these consequences falls on those who carried on the policy which caused them; we disown responsibility. Social Democracy has combated that fateful development with all its strength, and even to the last it worked for the maintenance of peace by imposing demonstrations in all countries, and particularly in agreement with our French brethren. Its endeavours have proved futile. Now we have to face the hard fact of war. The terrors of hostile invasions threaten us. We have not to decide to-day for or against the war, but upon the question of the measures necessary for the defence of our country. We have to think of the millions of our comrades who will be hit by this fate without fault on their part, for they will suffer most by the devastations of war."

If one could accept the theory enshrined in a good deal of the literature of the hour, what has happened is that three very clever men—one a historian, another a philosopher, and the third a military essayist—have for some time been telling the German nation to take leave of its better mind, and that now, a favourable occasion having arisen, it has done their bidding. It may be true of the Germans, as one of their writers has said, that "two hundred years of discipline have made them obedient," but they are not so obedient as that. Whatever may have been the influence of these clever men—and that the influence of each in his way has been considerable cannot be doubted—they alone could never have perverted a nation's mind and soul so speedily, and by the mere power of persuasion have driven that nation headlong into the course of folly and wrong-doing which has drawn upon it the condemnation of the whole world.

The present mentality and moral sentiment of the German nation, as illustrated by its entire attitude towards the war, must be attributable to far deeper and more radical causes, and it is the more imperative to try to discover these causes, since if it can be shown that a given set of conditions has been a source of continual menace in the past and has brought about the present disaster, it will follow that only by the removal of those conditions can there be any hope of immunity against similar misfortune in future. Only on the presupposition of some general and deep-seated source of political and moral mischief can one understand a whole nation committing itself to a course of action so evil in the sight of God and honest men.

The hypothesis on which I desire to work is broadly this, that the system under which the German nation allows itself to be governed dooms it to political impotence, paralyses public opinion, perverts the public conscience, and inevitably destroys the individual sense of responsibility for acts done in the nation's name; further, that this system of government so effectually excludes the German people from participation in public affairs that whatever its views on war and peace may at

any time be, their parliaments have no power whatever either of decision or deliberation in a matter so momentous.

It would be absurd to contend that the present war is the direct result of a certain body of political theories. It will be found, however, that the theories which it will be necessary to examine involve implications far more important than the theories themselves, and yield as by-products evils and abuses so fatal to healthy national life, moral cankers and corruptions that eat so deeply into the very core of personal character and the public conscience, that when their existence has been recognized and their influence understood, the present moral aberrations of the German people, strange and lamentable as they are, will cease to be a source of perplexity and bewilderment.

The acceptance of this hypothesis does not in the least affect the ultimate responsibility of the German nation for the policy followed and the acts done by its Government, but it does afford a hope of tracing to their origin some at least of the main influences which have fostered the war spirit and have allowed the war party at last to gain the upper hand and to work its evil will upon Germany and Europe. The reader will not need to read far before seeing for himself that the idea of exoneration is entirely remote from my mind.

When the reservations already stated are borne in mind it becomes easier to estimate the importance of the political teachers who have so powerfully influenced the German mind during recent years. There has been a tendency at all times to identify genetically any political movement of exceptional importance with certain commanding personalities, *e.g.* the English Revolution with Hampden, the French Revolution with Rousseau, where the larger fact is that such personalities have only gathered together and voiced the tendencies of their time. If most writers of the day are to be believed the political spirit of modern Germany, in so far as it is a spirit of force and aggression, has been created by several men, pre-eminently Heinrich von Treitschke, Friedrich Nietzsche, and General von Bernhardi. The influence of the

first of these writers goes back about four decades, while that of the last began for practical purposes only a few years ago. Treitschke, through his political and historical writings and lectures, has been by far the greatest power, yet even in his special sphere he did not stand alone. Other historians, like Von Sybel, Koser, Ægidi, and Delbrück, have worked more or less on the same lines. What all of them did, however, was to add to a stream of tendency already running strongly, and the springs of this stream lie much further back and must be sought deep in German and Prussian life and history.

Treitschke and the school of historians to which he belonged, with their echoes and imitators, expounded and enforced certain conceptions of history and political philosophy. These conceptions were not new, however, but were the traditional Prussian conceptions, which they found to their hand, embodied in the spirit, the organization, and the institutions of the State created by the Hohenzollerns. Estimating Prussia's contribution to German civilization, Prince von Bülow reminds us in his book "Imperial Germany" that Prussia gave to Germany the State. And the old Prussian conception of the State was an absolutistic conception; it was a State in which the Sovereign possessed an unlimited right to administer public affairs according to his judgment through his Ministers and an all-powerful bureaucracy. For over sixty years this absolute power of the Crown has been restricted by constitutional forms, but the spirit of autocracy still lives in Prussia and to a greater or less extent throughout all Germany, under whose systems of government the Princes continue as of old to rule as well as reign.

What Treitschke and others have done is simply to construct a systematic theory of the State based on the actual practice, to provide a justification and a defence of a political system which in fact holds the field, and to point to the practical conclusions to which the dominant conception logically leads. Even General von Bernhardi's teaching is only Treitschke's doctrine transmuted by a mind whose preoccupation is war, and applied according to supposed military necessities.

When we have realized what the distinctively Prusso-German conception of State life is, and have seen this conception with all its consequences translated into national life and thought, we shall have found explanation sufficient of the existing paralysis of political life, and shall come to understand how from that paralysis there were bound to spring an incoherent public opinion, an enfeebled public will, and a perverted public conscience, leading to the virtual abdication by the nation of any sense, collective or individual, of moral responsibility in relation to public affairs.

II. The State as Power

Because Treitschke's influence has been so conspicuous, his statement of the German theory of State life may be regarded as representative.* Substantially he bases his theories of State organization, purpose, and function upon the political philosophy of Hegel, of whom he has spoken as "the first real political personality amongst German philosophers," as Hegel in turn appropriated the essential ideas which prevailed in Greek antiquity and whose classical exponent is Aristotle, the father of statecraft. He is willing to allow that in his exaltation of the State Hegel went too far, yet he holds that his exaggeration of its province was good for Germany, torn asunder as it was in his day, and long continued to be, by particularism and needing to its concentration the cultivation of a strong State consciousness and the pressure of a strong State discipline.

The State is the first essential expression of the life of a civilized community. "The State," says Treitschke, "must not be regarded as an invention—as a thing which might not have existed. It is as impossible to imagine men without a State as a forest without trees." The primary purpose of the State is self-preservation and power; hence only strong States are worthy of existence,

* In this summary of Treitschke's political doctrine, which, though short, is sufficient for present purposes, I have in part used notes of his lectures at Berlin University as heard by me many years ago.

and States unable to defend themselves are self-condemned. He even looked forward to the time when the little independent offshoots of Germanism in Europe—Holland, Switzerland, Belgium—would be joined to the German Empire. In general, Treitschke speaks of weakness as the most reprehensible and most contemptible of all political sins, and as, in politics, the "sin against the Holy Ghost."

Just as Hegel, in spite of his doctrine of progressive development, wished to petrify a certain set of political dogmas, so Treitschke would petrify the modern constitutional monarchy as created in the middle of the last century. I remember how he once spoke of Hobbes' theory of government as "simply frightful," yet the semi-absolutism of the Prussian State to-day was for him so liberal as to need no further modification. It was not always so, however, for in early life he was a Liberal, only breaking from his party when Liberalism resorted to a policy of negations in the sixties of last century. The British monarchy appeared to him unduly limited by constitutional restraints, and he spoke once of Montesquieu's praise of it as a gigantic error. Here he did not go even so far as his master Hegel, who admitted the practical merits of the British constitutional system, according to which "the King is merely the necessary dot over the *i*."

Not only is the State the necessary presupposition of civil society, but its power in the domain of government is theoretically subject to no limits. The individual exists for the State, and not the State for the individual. The claim that the highest duty of the State to itself is self-preservation, and that the highest duty of the individual citizen is to subordinate himself to the State and its ends, constitutes the final justification of war as not merely a permissible act but a legitimate State function. "The State," he says, "is not an academy of arts and sciences, still less a stock exchange. It is power, and therefore it contradicts its own nature if it neglects the army."

Treitschke accepts fully the Hegelian view that "natural

rights" do not exist, and that no rights at all can be possessed other than those created by the State. There is no absolute right and no absolute justice; all social ideas, standards, and institutions have merely a temporary validity; they are proper for the age which evolved them, but they have no claim to perpetuity. All advance presupposes possible change in the current social and political conceptions and the customs and institutions in which these conceptions are embodied.

Even international treaties, according to Treitschke, are like old coats which may be exchanged for new at a moment's notice. They claim only a relative value, since their binding force depends altogether upon whether they are in harmony with the conditions existing at a given time. "As an individual I may express an opinion to-day without binding myself to hold it for ever, or even for a year, and in the case of a State treaty an undertaking once given may be disregarded if there are good grounds for withdrawing from it." Again: "In concluding treaties the State does so always with the tacit reservation that there is no power beyond and above it to which it is responsible, and it must be the sole judge as to whether it is expedient to respect its obligations." All such "scraps of paper," therefore, only bind a State so long as it is pleased to honour them; if its interest requires it they may be summarily set upon one side. Nietzsche puts the same idea in the words, "He who commands, what need has he of agreements?" The relativity of all political conceptions carries logically the implication that the events of history are links in an unbroken chain of development, and that their occurrence is their justification. Thus the violence of the aggressor is sanctified by success; the fate of his victim should be lightened by the knowledge that it is merely an incident in the historical process by which society is assumed to be advancing to higher forms.

Since, however, no political conceptions possess absolute truth, it follows that a State is justified in setting the standard of its own morality. A code of morality applying to individuals cannot bind a State, since the purposes of individual life and State life are different. The State

exists for power and whatever will fulfil that purpose is right. As Bernhardi says, "The morality of the State must be judged by the nature and *raison d'être* of the State and not of the individual citizen." * It will be observed that this modern political philosophy does not claim that the State has not and cannot have a definite morality. Such a negative position would almost be more satisfactory than the positive contention, which is that every State in every age must set up its own moral standard, independently of any standards that may happen to be generally accepted at the time. It is a contention worthy of Frederick the Great's military principle that in appropriating territories he preferred to appropriate first and discover sufficient reasons afterwards.†

Goethe taught much the same ideas of State morality. It was in keeping with his latitudinarian views of life that he set up the doctrine that the State must be held superior to the moral laws which regulate private action. He held that political questions could not be settled by ethical principles, and that a moral State was impossible and well-nigh a contradiction in terms. Force is supreme, and will always remain so; a State will ever seek increase of power, and use it for its own preservation, and not disinterestedly for the realization of right and justice. In a conversation with Eckermann (January 4, 1824) Goethe is reported to have said: "I take a higher ground than the ordinary moralist. I say frankly —no king keeps his word or is able to do so; he must always give way to the force of circumstances. For us poor Philistines the opposite method of conduct is a duty, but not for the great ones of the earth."

These ideas of public ethics are in striking contrast to the teaching of Kant and Fichte. They both preached the unity of all ethical law. To them morality is one and imperative for individual and State alike; the act which

* "Germany and the Next War."

† Frederick the Great's maxims of statecraft in general had a great attraction for Treitschke, who once said of the critics who disagreed with them: "Moral preachers and radical Philistines judge Frederick the Great in a small-minded way."

is right or wrong for one is just as right or wrong for the other; and according to Kant the rule of all conduct must be that each individual action shall be capable of serving as the principle of a universal law.

It is questionable whether the political ethic of Kant and Fichte ever commended itself to modern Prussian statesmanship, inheriting as it did the Frederician traditions, and it has been forsaken more and more by the German people in general, in proportion as the national spirit has been enervated by political and materialistic success. Even the revival of idealism in the middle of last century, which seemed for a short time to hold the promise of better things, failed to evoke any response from the ruling classes. Already the course which German political thought and policy were to take for three-quarters of a century had been clearly foreshadowed. Bismarck had been called to be the adviser of the Prussian Crown, and amongst the weapons with which he was to win for Prussia hegemony in Germany, and for Germany unity, idealism found no place.

The earlier movements for the unification of Germany had rested upon an altogether idealistic basis; it was to be unification by law and peaceful development. The movement itself was one of the noblest examples of national devotion to an unselfish idea known to German history. Bismarck, the man of force, came and discovered that the political problems of the day were "not to be solved by parliaments and parliamentary majorities." He enunciated the doctrine that "political questions are questions of power," and declared that German unity could be won only by "blood and iron." What is more, he carried Germany with him, and his teaching still dominates the German mind.

"To-day," wrote a thoughtful German publicist not long ago, "right is for the most part created by force, and the moral ideas which should and would reverse this relationship wander like bloodless shadows about the political arena." * When William I of Prussia became Regent in 1858 he declared, "In Germany Prussia must

* Dr. S. Saenger in *Die Neue Rundschau*, August 1913.

make moral conquests; the world must know that Prussia is everywhere ready to protect the right." Germany knows how great Prussia's moral conquests have been, and the world knows how Germany has since protected the right.

Referring to the influence of this teaching upon contemporary politics, the late Dr. Friedrich Paulsen writes in "Zur Ethik und Politik":

"Since the sixties of last century a new faith has sprung up, at first timidly and ashamed—belief in power and the will to power. This gave to the close of the century its special significance. . . . 'Political questions are questions of power.' So said Bismarck with incisive and offensive bluntness, and as history justified him the German nation now thinks what he taught it—often to the point of the extremest one-sidedness. And this is held to apply not only to qustions of external politics, but to those of domestic politics as well.* That man has right on his side who has the strongest will and has power behind him. Compared with this what is the value of old papers? 'Sic volo sic jubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas,' expressed the actual attitude of ruling persons, but only in our day has this become a maxim."

There is no need to believe that Bismarck went for his ideas of force to either political philosophers or historians. For theory of any kind he had a disregard amounting to contempt. His business was to attain certain political objects which to him seemed necessary for Prussian greatness, and when he had convinced himself and then his Sovereign of the expediency of his aims, he never troubled about the judgments of professional moralists. Nevertheless, it was of immense advantage to him as a Minister, the smoothness of whose political work required the skilful management of parliamentary parties and public

* As an illustration of the uses to which the teaching has been put in domestic politics, the fact may be recalled that the law for the compulsory expropriation of the Polish landowners passed by the Prussian Diet several years ago on the demand of the Government was expressly justified on the ground that "in political matters might goes before right."

opinion, that the policy which he was carrying out should have found faithful exponents in the lecture-rooms of Prussian universities, where the national thought and conscience of the present and future were being moulded. While, therefore, academic teaching is not responsible for the position occupied in German politics by the doctrine of force, it has certainly given to the doctrine a sanction and an authority with the present generation which it might not have derived from historical facts alone.

Treitschke's own services were in this respect pre-eminent. He may be said to have reduced the Prussian State to a single formula, and that formula was power. No other modern German writer of the first rank taught so systematically the doctrine that "force rules the world, has ruled it, shall rule it." His influence as the theoretical representative of the force doctrine was as great as Bismarck's success in its practical application. One of Treitschke's colleagues in Berlin, Dr. Friedrich Paulsen, who admired the man without endorsing his "tendency," has said:

"Amongst contemporary historians Heinrich von Treitschke has exercised the greatest influence upon the political thought of the rising generation. With the characteristic vehemence of his eloquence he preaches the maxim that the State is power, and war is its first, most elementary function; he goes so far as to declare the idea of perpetual peace as not only a logical blunder but a profoundly unethical conception."*

Now that the evil results of this teaching have been realized everywhere except in Germany there are apologists who would have us believe that Treitschke, after all, is not one of the special mentors of the German nation. Dr. Dernburg has said this in America; he would hardly venture to say it openly at home.† And even if Treitschke's individual responsibility and Germany's indebtedness to him were less than they are, the essential fact is

* "Zur Ethik und Politik."

† Letter to the New York Press, October 13, 1914, in reply to an article by Viscount Bryce.

that the teaching itself has been accepted, and that German policy is to-day carrying it out with thoroughness.

III. Treitschke's Influence as an Academic Teacher*

The political doctrines which have been passed in review have been propagated by a host of modern German writers—historians, philosophers, publicists—and may be said to have passed into the thought of the present generation. The special significance of Treitschke lies in the fact that he applied these ideas to the case of Prussia, illustrating them from Prussian history, but also enforcing them as a guide to the right lines of national development in the present and future. Moreover, his teaching was more direct and emphatic than that of any of his contemporaries.

Treitschke had attracted the attention of the Prussian Government before he was invited to Berlin University early in the 'seventies. Even in his native Saxony he had preached national unity, the extinction of the small States, and the obligation and right of Prussia to take the lead in the creation of a Germanic Empire. Just as Bismarck was the strong man he had waited for, so he himself was to prove the great apostle of Germanism and of Prussian hegemony. All his life the interests of Germany and particularly of Prussia were everything to him, and nothing else on God's earth greatly mattered.

Ranke said that his task as a historian was to tell "the naked truth without gloss, with no romance even in the least degree, and no fancies of the brain," and it is recorded that he only consented with much misgiving to become the official historian of the Prussian State and Crown, knowing that his scientific conscience and love of objectivity would be sorely tried by the duties associated with that position. Such scruples never troubled Treitschke when in due time he took Ranke's place. It was characteristic of him as an academic teacher that he

* The major portion of pp. 34 to 41 appeared in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for January 1915, and is reprinted with the editor's permission.

combined political philosophy and history, and both bore the Prussian-Hohenzollern stamp; just as his political theories were drawn from the life of the Prussian State in practice, so in his teaching of German history Prussia was the centre and its glorification the purpose. This enthusiasm for Prussia and all things Prussian was the more remarkable since Treitschke was not himself a Prussian, and strictly speaking only partially a German, for he came of Slavic ancestry. It is noteworthy, however, that in his "German History" Treitschke in one place uses the words "we Prussians," and it may be surmised that he changed his political nationality on settling in the northern kingdom. His admiration for Prussia was primarily the political admiration of a glowing patriot who saw no hope for German unity and for the progress of German ideas and influence unless Prussia became both Germany's leader and its interpreter to the rest of the world. The particularism of the past had disgusted him, as it disgusted Hegel, and seeing in it the changeless enemy of every aspiration towards national unity, he wiped his hands of the Central and South Germany of nearly twenty States, Courts, and Parliaments, embraced the ideal of Germanism realized through and in Prussia, and made Prussia his home and the scene of his labours. Treitschke can rebuke the "boastful self-complacency of Teutonism," but of Prussia he speaks as "not only the most powerful but the noblest and most intelligent of the German States"—a verdict in which the rest of Germany has never concurred.

Since the death of Ranke no one has disputed Treitschke's pre-eminence amongst contemporary German historians, omitting, of course, Mommsen, whose dominion was unique. Treitschke's colleagues in historical science crowned him with their own hands, and his countrymen cordially confirmed the choice. The glorification of Germany in European history and of Prussia in German history was his mission for over thirty years, and he pursued it with singular fidelity and zeal in elaborate books, in a long succession of essays published in his own and other historical reviews, and still more in the lectures

which he delivered as a professor of Berlin University. Yet the peculiar merit of Treitschke as a historian suggests his peculiar defect. Germany and Prussia bulked so large in his mind that he fell into a partiality and a partisanship which were inexcusable in a historian. He viewed the world and mankind from the Teutonic angle of vision, and theorized and judged accordingly. His strong prejudices lessened the value of his work when tried by such a test as Niebuhr or Ranke would have applied, but they increased rather than diminished his position, authority, and popularity with his countrymen.

Treitschke's Prussian one-sidedness was even more conspicuous in his spoken addresses as a professor than in his writings. In the lecture-room no one expected complete objectivity from him, and seldom did a lecture pass without drastic judgments upon some country or other that had failed to take Germany at its own valuation, or that stood in Germany's light. German *Kultur* was never the "culture" of the English drawing-room, and even in Treitschke's day it was becoming a prickly, *Noli-me-tangere* sort of thing, the *Kultur* of the cynic who bade Plato remark that the straw of a tub was better than all his fine carpets. Now it was Russia, now France, now England, now the United States which came under Treitschke's censure; each had its turn, but on the whole England and France received more than their share of unfriendly attention.

Extreme in opinions, he was extreme, too, in language, and if he had a dislike he expressed it strongly and at times offensively. Often his passing outbursts of sarcasm and ill-will had no relation whatever to either history or political philosophy, but it was "Treitschke's way," for so the indulgent verdict went. It was not a gracious or a persuasive way, but the man's candour and earnestness and the impression which he gave at all times—even when in his worst humours—that he was uttering his honest convictions disarmed serious resentment. Moreover, Treitschke's tendency to exaggerate Germany's place and importance in the world was in part a natural reaction

against the old national spirit of excessive humility. It will be found that much of his aggressive polemic fell to a time when Germany had only just ceased to be a geographical expression and Germans to apologize for their nationality, as Boswell excused his to Johnson, "because they could not help it."

Treitschke's attitude towards England was distinctly more friendly in the earlier than the later part of his public life. I am inclined to think that for some reason or other there came a turning point in his political development at which his attitude towards this country, which had formerly been benevolently neutral, became positively hostile, and that from that time onward his Anglophobism increased to the end. It is certain that some at least of his prejudices were due to the fact that his opinions of England and English institutions, once formed, were never modified, however English life and thought might have broadened.

It may be questioned whether Treitschke's political theories alone would have found such a ready acceptance had they not been enforced by a singular brilliancy of language, and an enthusiasm which to the young in particular counted for more than fidelity to fact. Of Treitschke's literary style his books speak, but the fascination of his vivacious periods was not half so great as the vivid eloquence of the living voice, an eloquence whose effect, strange to say, seemed not to be spoiled in the least by a monotonous and somewhat indistinct articulation due to his deafness from childhood. His command of language was complete, and once you were able to follow him there was no resisting his charm. Without haste, yet literally without rest, he would pour out from the treasure of an inexhaustible vocabulary a continuous stream of language, every sentence as perfect in construction as though read from one of his books. He never faltered unless overcome by feeling, for his passions were vehement. Beginning his lecture directly he had ascended to the desk, he gave you no breathing space until he had spoken his full three-quarters of an hour or hour and a half, as the case might be, and then suddenly and without

warning the voice ceased, and a moment later he had disappeared. Yet a more finished, more concise, more logical manner of address was seldom heard.

On one occasion I discussed Treitschke with one of his Berlin colleagues, Professor Koser, who succeeded him as Prussian Historiographer, and I remarked on his prejudices. "Yes," was the sudden, reproving rejoinder, "but think of his language!" If brilliancy of language can redeem historical partiality, then indeed Treitschke is beyond reproach. I doubt whether he had a sense of humour. So profoundly serious was he in character, so absorbed by the importance of his message, that I never once saw any trace of a smile pass over his face, even when he was launching mordant sallies which moved his hearers to laughter.

There can be no question that Treitschke's teaching has been an immense power in Germany. Successive generations of students, comprising the officers, scholars, statesmen, politicians, administrative officials, and journalists of the future, sat at his feet, and his classrooms were always crowded. A number of his colleagues also invariably attended the "public" lectures which he, like certain other leading Berlin professors, was expected to give during the winter term. They occupied chairs on each side of the reading-desk, and formed a guard of honour when, at the end of his oration, he went out to the accompaniment of thunderous applause. Only the foremost lecturers enjoyed this flattering attention from their peers. Thus there went forth from his lecture-room many effluences and impulses which reached into every part of the national life.

The influence was not altogether good where Treitschke's pupils accepted his teaching as a whole, for with pure gold of political wisdom there was much alloy. Yet while his lectures were faulty as presentations of history, warped by prejudice and full of uncharitableness, they were powerful incentives to high living and to unselfish conceptions of citizenship. If he was dogmatic beyond the right of an instructor addressing men who had already tasted of the tree of knowledge, his enthusiastic nature,

his fervid eloquence, and his unique power of interpreting to Germans their own minds and aspirations made him the idol of the rising generation. Above all, no writer or teacher of his time did so much to stimulate the patriotic spirit of young Germany as Treitschke. His patriotism was one-sided, blind, and not always just, and it saw no good save in Judea, but it was intensely sincere. It was no sentiment of the lip, but a passion of the heart; it was no patriotism *d'occasion*, no Sunday, bandbox patriotism, but one for every day and all his life. Love of the fatherland may be said to have been the master motive of his literary work and his public action, and his was the true and pure afflatus. Hence he talked patriotism vehemently because he so felt, and because he was under a sacred compulsion. The burden of his thought was "Woe unto me if I preach not *this* gospel!"

And how he preached it! I happened to be present in March 1887 when Treitschke brought to a close a course of lectures on German history. At that time the public mind was more unsettled on the question of war with France than it had been since 1875. Just before, Bismarck had made in the Reichstag one of his most famous speeches (it was my good fortune to hear it), wherein he made known the terms of the Austro-German Alliance, and pressed for a large increase in the Army Estimates on pain of imminent national disaster. When he had finished his lecture Treitschke spoke of the conflict which many believed to be impending. "We live in troublous times," he said, "and war may occur at any moment. But whether it comes in a few weeks or be deferred for a few years, the certainty is unquestionable. Bear in mind, young men, all I have said about the rise of our country. Patriotism is the highest and holiest of passions"—and here the tears rolled down the professor's cheeks—"and if before we meet again some of you are called to fight, remember that it will be for the unity of the German Empire, which has just been won, and against the anarchical tendencies of the times." He could go no further, and ended in sobs, but the feelings of his hearers had been worked up to the highest point, and for some

moments all we could do was to look at one another in tense silence. Those who know anything of the impressionable German character will be able to picture to themselves the rapturous enthusiasm which followed.

Such demonstrative avowal of patriotic sentiment is far more respectable in Germany than in our own country of dignified reserves and mighty repressions, and it may be, as we are sometimes told, that our quieter mood is that of a higher order of citizenship. What we are apt to forget is that the great majority of men and women do not belong to that order; they are honest, stolid folk whose torpid imaginations need to be vigorously fanned into flame, and who often only get their emotions—and the emotion of patriotism amongst them—as they get certain diseases, by infection.

These memories must not end with any suggestion of captious criticism of Germany's supreme modern patriot. I for one find myself unable to join in the hue-and-cry against Treitschke as though he were a sort of political outlaw and his influence wholly pernicious. As a nation we owe him no thanks. From the English standpoint he was a Chauvinist, but so from the German were Seeley and Cramb—alas, too soon taken from us, to our loss—and they, too, were both professors. And yet I am confident that upon those of my countrymen who heard Treitschke's lectures his glorification of Prussia to the disparagement of the rest of the world had an effect which he cannot have anticipated. For when he spoke of "Prussia" we heard "England"; the pictures of Prussia's deeds and prowess called up in the mind the mightier deeds and brighter lustre of England's far older history; and we found ourselves asking—for one hearer I can speak with confidence—If Prussia, which has done so much for itself, so little for the world, be really so great and glorious, what of the mother of races, at whose breast new nations have been nourished and from whose genius new civilizations have sprung—the England who has given her very self, body, soul, and spirit, to mankind?

In his judgments upon this country Treitschke was often unjust, sometimes bad-mannered, but even under

provocation one had the comforting thought that England was big and big-hearted enough to bear both abuse and spite. Besides, Treitschke's dislike of England came unquestionably from the traditional envy of his nation, and people do not at heart think unworthily of those whom they envy. Hence, in spite of himself, one could mentally put this Prussian swashbuckler into the witness-box and make him turn Crown evidence for England's greatness. It is probable that many an Englishman owed to him a welcome and precious deepening of his own national consciousness, new and larger perceptions of his country's place in the world, its mission and destiny, and a brighter glow of his patriotic ardours. Even at this long distance of time, the instincts of loyalty and gratitude refuse to be overborne, and I confess that I, for one, am still so unredeemed that were I required to throw stones at Heinrich von Treitschke, I should wish my stones to be pebbles, and when I had thrown them I should want to run away.

IV. The Ethics of War

It is easy to see what conclusions might be expected to follow from a theory of the State which makes the State omnipotent, subordinates the individual and collective will to State interest, as determined in the case of Germany by a military caste, and justifies the State—as represented by this ruling caste—in laying down its own political morality. It makes force the supreme arbiter in all questions of external politics, rejects the assumption upon which modern civilization is supposed to be based, that nations are under certain implied obligations of friendship and faith to each other and of benevolent purpose to mankind in general, and revives that condition of "war of all against all" which has been regarded as a closed chapter of human history.

"The law of the stronger holds good everywhere," says General von Bernhardi. "Those forms survive which are able to procure for themselves the most favourable conditions of life and to assert themselves in the universal economy of nature."

Such is the broad doctrine taught at the beginning of the twentieth century as the starting point of State policy by an authoritative German writer. And the danger of such doctrine is that what the philosophers and publicists teach the ruling military caste practises, for in no country is the relation of theory to practice so intimate, and the fidelity of practice to theory so complete, as in Germany, where principles are enunciated, not for their value as abstract ideas, but as guides to practical action.

We have seen proofs of this during the past few months. Treitschke and his disciple Bernhardi both teach that the value of treaty obligations must be determined by interest. The latter presses this doctrine into the direct service of militarism and force in the axiom: "Recognized rights are often violated by political action. But they are never absolute rights; they are of human origin and therefore imperfect and variable." Such teaching finds logical expression in Germany's violation of the Belgian treaty of neutrality and independence of 1839, and proclaims that act as one of patriotism where other nations condemn it as a crime. Similarly it exonerates and exalts as moral the falsity of the German Emperor's promise to Belgium, when he visited that country in October 1910, that its neutrality should never be violated by him, and of the still later pledge of the German Foreign Secretary, Herr von Jagow, when on April 29, 1913, he assured the Budget Committee of the Reichstag that "Belgian neutrality is defined by international treaties and these treaties Germany will maintain." Germany does not prepare its military plans of campaign at a week's or a year's notice, and it cannot be doubted that when these words were spoken both the Emperor and his Minister knew that directly war broke out with France—the war for which the military party was longing—Germany's troops would, with permission or without, march across the Belgian frontier.

Further, according to the same teachers, all aggression is permissible if the aggressor deems it to be politically expedient and in the course of historical development. This argument has lately been used by the same Power

to justify the desolation of Belgium, and that not only by military apologists, who are not concerned with considerations of political right, but by even a Liberal publicist like Dr. Friedrich Naumann, the leader of a parliamentary party, who has advanced the plea that inasmuch as Belgium's destruction stood in the way of a larger State Belgium has no right to complain. "Even if it be assumed," he says, "that in Belgium as honourable a wish for neutrality were present as we suppose to be the case in Switzerland, the question always remains whether the smaller individual States have the right in every possible case to remove themselves from the reconstructions which make world-history. That is the root of the matter." The significance of such paltry, sophistical argumentation is increased by the fact that before Dr. Naumann became a politician and an apologist for war he was a clergyman and an apostle of peace.

So, too, as Field-Marshal von der Goltz has laid down the brutal theory that "inexorability and seemingly hideous callousness are among the attributes necessary to him who would achieve great things in war," the Emperor William II orders his Generals in Belgium to give to the wretched people of that country a warning of such "frightfulness" that they will for very fear remain tranquil while their land is being desolated and their towns destroyed, and the Generals do it. It is hard to believe that only four years ago the German Emperor, with the Empress and Princess Royal of Prussia, was receiving in Brussels (October 25–27, 1910) the heartfelt ovations of the trustful Belgian people, ovations prompted by their reliance upon his good-will and good faith. Replying to his more than enthusiastic reception, the Emperor then said:

"I and all Germany follow with friendly sympathy the astounding success which has fallen to the restlessly active Belgian nation in every department of trade and industry. Belgium's trade encircles the whole earth; and Germans and Belgians everywhere meet in the peaceful work of civilization. Belgium's cultivation of ideal pursuits, in which her poets and artists have attained so

conspicuous a place, fills us with equal admiration. May happiness and blessing flow forth from your Majesty's government upon your royal house and your people. That is the deepest wish of my heart ! "

In one thing Germany has departed from the teaching of Treitschke in the present war, for that apologist for force would not have sanctioned the destruction of Louvain, or the wanton sacking of the French *châteaux*. He tells us: "There has been developed in international law the principle that those great treasures of culture of a State which minister to art and science must be looked upon as the common property of all mankind, and must be secured from loot and robbery."

Bismarck unquestionably did more than all the professors who have reduced his policy to a system of doctrine to accustom the German mind to the idea of force as an instrument of political policy, since he put this idea into practice and his applications of it succeeded brilliantly. He has claimed in his own defence, however, that before he appealed to the arbitrament of force he convinced himself that right was on his side. This was the reason he once gave for his refusal to go to war with France over the Luxemburg question in 1867 against the urgent wish of Moltke. He was not satisfied that the prospect of success held out by the famous strategist was of itself sufficient justification, and he refused to draw the sword. "The decision," he said, "was not an easy one, for something else had to be considered—the question of right. I did not want a war which would enable others later on to reproach us with having entered upon it wickedly. Justice had to be on our side beyond every doubt."

Bernhardi has no reservations of the kind. "Might is the supreme right," he says, "and the dispute as to what is right is decided by the arbitrament of war. War gives a biologically just decision, since its decisions rest on the very nature of things." The "very nature of things" means here, of course, the power of the strong to crush the weak. So that on this argument if Germany took Luxemburg and Belgium to-day it would be equally justified in taking Holland, Denmark, and

Switzerland to-morrow; though on the same argument the Allies would if successful be justified in reducing the German Empire to its original parts, and if they pleased in stamping out Prussia altogether.

This argument of the *ultima ratio* of force is, of course, nothing else than the application to international relationships of the code of honour accepted in the Prussian officers' corps, according to which quarrels can be made with impunity so long as satisfaction is left to the arbitrament of the duel. When a man cruelly breaks the confidence of his friend and host and wrecks his domestic life it is only necessary to reply to the inevitable challenge and kill the aggrieved husband, and the original offence is justified; the death of the one whom he has wronged is a "biologically just decision." In the same way all that is needed to justify wars of aggression is that they shall in the opinion of the State —that is, in Germany, of the Emperor and his fellow Princes—be thought necessary. The issue settles all questions of right and wrong.

To be just to Prussia, the doctrine is no new one in its history. Mirabeau said that war was "Prussia's only industry," and most of the great wars of that State have been waged in accordance with the immoral principle of expediency which is now put forward as a leading maxim of statecraft. In modern times Bismarck on his own confession waged two wars for the deliberate purpose of acquiring new territories, and another for the purpose of proving that Prussia was stronger than Austria. All were wars of aggression, and Bismarck himself never pretended that they were anything else, though he claimed historical justification for each one of them.

Bismarck gave many amazing revelations of his own mind and morality when, after his fall, he for a time cast reserve to the winds, and amongst them was his avowal that he meant always to tear Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark when the opportunity was favourable, and that even if three Silesian wars, including a war of seven years, had been necessary he would have fought them in order to obtain this province, since its possession

was essential "if Germany was ever to have a navy." He has also confessed with cynical frankness how his conviction of the advantage of a war with France in 1870 led him to falsify the Ems telegram in order to make it inevitable. Nevertheless, the war thus provoked is still called "holy" in German school histories. Alarmed by the quickness with which France had recovered from its hæmorrhage, Bismarck might have fallen upon his victim again in 1875, had not the British and Russian Sovereigns exercised a restraining influence. Prussia and Germany are not the only countries which have waged bloody wars of ambition and conquest. The uniqueness of their position lies in the fact that they have elevated war in the interest of aggression into a virtue and the doctrine of the superiority of might to right into a maxim of political philosophy.*

Nowhere is this doctrine avowed and applied so bluntly and mercilessly as in General von Bernhardi's book "Germany and the Next War." A spirit of callousness and mischief-making truly diabolical in character runs through this volume, and one might picture a very Mephistopheles directing the pen which put to paper its gross brutalities of word and thought and policy. Morality having been reduced to the doctrine that might is right, and war having been shown to be not a curse but a good creature of God, the writer proceeds to set all Europe in

* To this point we have already arrived, that at least one of the minor European States has in the present war espoused the cause of Germany—outwardly at least—avowedly from fear that were it to do otherwise Germany, if successful, would punish it.

A Stockholm correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, reporting on October 20, 1914, a conversation with a Swedish statesman, writes as follows:

"'Can you not rely upon British determination to preserve you from attack?' I asked.

"'What about Belgium?' he said. 'England guaranteed Belgium. Belgium is no more.'

"'But in the end—' I protested.

"'Ah, in the end! Perhaps. But now! Think of Belgium now! We cannot afford to run such a risk.'"

conflagration. No statecraft is too crooked, no devices are too ignoble, to effect the end desired, which is the supremacy of Germany at the cost of the rest of Europe. "Let it be the task of our diplomacy so to shuffle the cards that we may be attacked by France, for then there would be reasonable prospect that Russia for a time would remain neutral." The writer glories in the fact that Frederick the Great's wars were wars of aggression—"None of the wars which he fought had been forced upon him; none of them did he postpone as long as possible; he had always determined to be the aggressor, to anticipate his opponents, and to secure for himself favourable prospects of success"—and he urges Germany to-day to follow his example. If war offers the promise of advantage, no other justification is needed; if it can be waged more advantageously now than later, it is folly to wait.

"When the hostile States are weakened or hampered by affairs at home and abroad, but its own warlike strength shows elements of superiority, it is imperative to use the favourable circumstances to promote its own political aims. . . . It was in my opinion the most serious mistake in German policy that a final settling of accounts with France was not effected at a time when the state of international affairs was favourable and success might confidently have been expected. There has indeed been no lack of opportunities. We have only our policy of peace and renunciation to thank for the fact that we are confronted by the momentous choice between resigning all claim to world-power or disputing this claim against numerically superior enemies."

It is difficult for English people, accustomed to regard international amity as the true goal of civilization, to realize fully the menace of this teaching, for it belongs to a mental and moral world entirely different from their own. War on this theory is no longer viewed as a dire necessity, to be resorted to only when every resource of diplomacy and conciliation has been exhausted, but simply as one amongst the other proper purposes of national

life, nay, as itself an expression of the highest civilization. The only possible comment upon such reasoning is that made by Hegel when Goethe deplored the intellectual dexterity which tried to make the false true and the true false: "It is only done by people who are mentally diseased."

Nevertheless, the men who teach and applaud these theories are ever bidding us remember that Germany is the land of Fichte. There is no need for the reminder; the need is rather to recall the fact to Germany's remembrance, for Fichte has been forgotten by his own people. To Fichte war was no trifling matter of political opportunism, but a fearful evil, only to be justified when its object was unselfish—to defend national boundaries and to repel invasion. As a German writer, Dr. Saenger, foreseeing the sinister effects of the war propagandism of recent years, wrote not many months ago: "Never did Fichte in the 'Sturm und Drang' of his national paroxysms think of war as an eternally necessary reality of historical life. Never would Fichte have been able to suffer without a passionate outburst of disgust the selfish formula 'My country, right or wrong.'" * Fichte, like all idealists, looked for the end of war; to him "eternal peace" was "the only righteous relationship between States," and he even had a vision of a union of States, ever growing stronger and more comprehensive, until it became a true federation of mankind.† How severely he judged the spirit of aggression may be seen from the following words:

"In its own interest, in order not to encourage in its own citizens thoughts of injustice, robbery, and violence, and to allow them no other hope of gain save by industry and diligence within the sphere appointed by law, every State must as severely forbid, as carefully prevent, as completely recompense, and as severely punish injury to a citizen of a neighbouring State as it would were it committed against its own citizens. This law of the security

* Dr. S. Saenger in his article on "Political Tartufferie" in the *Neue Rundschau*, August 1913.

† "Grundlagen des Naturrechts," 1797.

of one's neighbours is a necessary law for every State which is not a robber State." *

These are noble German words, and they will be brought to Germany's recollection when the time comes for righting the crimes done to Belgium on the plea of national egoism and "historical development."

Nothing could better illustrate the sinister change which has come over the German mind than the frivolous and perverse thought which is current on the subject of war. To Clausewitz war was just as much a part of national policy as public education, and Moltke saw in it "a link in God's ordinance for the world." Sentiments of this kind were natural to these men, for war was to them an absorbing professional business. The modern war preachers, however, extol war with an enthusiasm which actual fighters have seldom shown. Treitschke applauded war as one of the greatest of moral agencies; it is "God's specific for the cure of ailing nations." For several years, indeed, German publicists have been proclaiming the necessity of war from this standpoint; other nations were to be murdered that the German nation might recover its lost vigour. "War is the only means," wrote Dr. W. Fuchs in *Die Post* of January 28, 1912, "that can to-day save the Germans as a nation from imminent physical and psychical enfeeblement and degeneration." "We are accustomed," Bernhardi writes, "to regard war as a curse, and refuse to recognize it as the greatest factor in the furtherance of culture and power." He repels this attitude as "dangerous" and deplores "the aspirations for peace which seem to dominate our age and threaten to poison the soul of the German people."

Again: "The soul of our nation is not reflected in that part of the Press which is continually dwelling on the necessity of upholding peace." "Our people," he says, "must learn to see that the maintenance of peace never can or may be the goal of a policy."

For fear Christianity should be invoked against war he tells us that Christianity has nothing to do with the matter. "Christian morality is personal and social, and

* "Bestimmung des Menschen," 1800.

from its nature cannot be political. . . . Christian morality is based, indeed, on the law of love : ' Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' But this law cannot claim any significance for the relations of one country to another, since its application to politics would lead to a conflict of duties."

Treitschke similarly rules Christian teaching out of court. " All reference to Christianity," he says, " is perverse. The Bible says explicitly that the powers that be shall bear the sword," and the only concession which he is prepared to make to pacifism is that with the advance of civilization wars will tend to become rarer and will be fought out more quickly because more furiously. So that Germany, besides having a culture and a morality of its own, claims also that Christian teaching shall also accommodate itself to its national interests and ambitions.

Views like these are not isolated in Germany, nor are they merely the extravagances of military minds ; on the contrary, they are widely held in civil circles. The Berlin *Post* of April 25, 1913, after setting forth a long list of imperialistic schemes which Germany would have to carry out in the immediate future, added, " It is untrue that the maintenance of peace is the principal purpose of the State, and to say so is to poison the sense of the nation with false and weak ideas." It was Germany's representatives at the first Hague Peace Conference of 1899 who spoked the wheels of the pacifist chariot. Baron von Stengel, a university professor, returned home from a later congress so convinced that " the growth of the peace movement involves national peril " that he wrote a book entitled " The World State and the Peace Problem," in which occur the following sentiments :

" War has more often facilitated than hindered human progress. Athens and Rome, not only in spite of but just because of their many wars, rose to the zenith of civilization. Great States like Germany and Italy were welded into nationalities only through blood and iron. Storm purifies the air and destroys the frail trees, leaving the sturdy oaks standing. War is the test of a nation's

political, physical, and intellectual worth. The State in which there is much that is rotten may vegetate for a while in peace, but in war the weakness is revealed."

He, too, would like to see the virus of pacifism ruthlessly exterminated from the German mind. He writes:

"The friends of peace have repeatedly expressed their regret that the peace movement has made less progress in Germany than in other countries. The German nation is rather to be congratulated than otherwise that this movement has not obtained a greater hold upon it. In Germany we have every reason not merely to regard peace propagandism with distrust, but to combat it with all earnestness. In such a matter our motto must be 'Principiis obsta,' and steps must be taken to prevent pacifist ideas from taking hold of our rising youth."

The leaders of the "Young Germany" movement are doing their best to realize the wish of this professorial advocate of war. One of them wrote in its official organ for October 1913:

"War is the noblest and holiest expression of human activity. For us, too, the glad, great hour of battle will strike. Still and deep in the German heart must live the joy of battle and the longing for it. Let us ridicule to the utmost the old women in breeches who fear war and deplore it as cruel or revolting. No, war is beautiful. Its august sublimity elevates the human heart beyond the earthly and the common. In the cloud palace above sit the heroes Frederick the Great and Blücher, and all the men of action—the Great Emperor, Moltke, Roon, and Bismarck are there as well, but not the old women who would take away our joy in war. When here on earth a battle is won by German arms and the faithful dead ascend to heaven, a Potsdam lance-corporal will call the guard to the door and 'old Fritz,' springing from his golden throne, will give the command to present arms. That is the heaven of Young Germany."

Such utterances must be given without comment, for comment would spoil them. However strange they may sound to English ears, they are seriously meant in Germany, and it is impossible to doubt that they express

sentiment widely entertained. It must be said in praise of the Socialist party that it is the only party which has had the courage to combat this teaching strenuously and persistently.

When such ideas of political morality gain ready entrance into a nation's mind it is not surprising to find Germany's professors, scholars, theologians, and other men of light and leading, with few known exceptions, united against the whole world in defending the breaking of treaties and the crushing of small States as morally justifiable. Prince Max of Saxony, brother of the reigning Sovereign, might have anticipated recent events when he said on July 4, 1910 : " We have long become accustomed to what Christendom should never become accustomed to, namely, the exclusion of divine truth from political life, and in particular from international affairs." But this practical atheism has for years been a part of Germany's political teaching, and the fruit was bound to follow. We see its fruit in the fact that in all the publications and utterances in which Germany's part in the war has been defended hitherto there is not a single word, not a shadow of incertitude, to suggest a bare suspicion that in wantonly violating the Belgian treaty of neutrality Germany did wrong, or that in defending its sacred word and honour Great Britain did right. Such a confusion of moral ideas is probably unique in history.

CHAPTER III

THE STATE AND THE CITIZEN

I. The Repression of Individuality

In the State conceived as power the individual citizen necessarily occupies a very subordinate place, for it leaves little room for the free play of personality in civic life. The entire structure of German, and particularly of Prussian, national life rests on this conception. Its most finished expression is, of course, seen in the crypto-absolutistic systems of political government under which the German peoples still live, in the more or less autocratic powers of their Sovereigns, in their irresponsible Executives, and in their impotent Legislatures. It is expressed no less, however, in their bureaucratic systems of administration, in the subjection of the Church, the universities, and the schools to State control, and in an intolerable system of police regulation. As the State is the supreme expression of national existence, the citizen is taught to look to the Government in every need and emergency, to rely upon it for initiative and impulse, and to accept its direction in most of the affairs of life. The abstract doctrines of Social Democracy might appear to lead to much the same result, but with the important difference that Socialism presumes a State authority not outside but identical with the nation, hence incorporating the collective will and carrying the collective sanction.

One of the results of the principle of concentrating power in a small ruling class, instead of throwing responsibility for the welfare of the commonwealth upon the whole body of the citizens, is that the fortunes of Prussia have been influenced far more than those of a democratic country like our own by the accidental presence or absence

at the head of the State of great personalities, able to impress themselves upon the life of their day. Prussia's position has therefore been subject to great oscillations, now rising to exceptional prominence, as under Frederick the Great, now falling to a low level, as in the time of Frederick William III, until Stein bent that weak monarch to his own iron will and gave a turn to the nation's fortunes. It is an interesting question of speculation to what depth of misfortune Prussia might again have fallen in the middle of last century and later had not King William I, who had followed a well-meaning but weak ruler, called to his aid the masterful Bismarck at the moment when he himself, despairing of making way against his difficulties, had written out his abdication.

"All things have a price; only man has worth," says Kant. "In the whole creation everything may be put to use; only man is a self-purpose." That idea is at variance with the Prussian theory of the State, which proceeds from the supposition that the State makes the citizen, not the citizen the State. It follows that the citizen so made is not an individuality, but a piece of mechanism. It is not personality that the State needs for its purposes in man or woman, but function; and the function to be performed is assigned just as methodically as the motion of crank or pinion. Everybody is given a definite place in the State system; where he is put he must remain, and the duty allotted to him he must discharge.

Treitschke puts the matter bluntly when he says that inasmuch as it is the duty and right of the State to govern it is a matter of secondary consequence whether it governs with the will of the citizens or not; if the citizens give to the laws and regulations imposed by the State a voluntary endorsement it is well, but such endorsement does not alter matters.

Nowhere else in the world does the State exert so large a control over the activities of its citizens as in Germany. All the more important professions are either administered or regulated by the State. The doctor and the lawyer, the dentist and the engineer, the clergyman and the civil

servant, the schoolmaster and the architect—all must enter their professions through the State door, of which this can be said with unalloyed praise, that it is a front door, for entrance by back ways and side ways and cellar ways and windows, as in the case of some honourable professions in England, is impossible. So, too, the journeyman must obtain a certificate of capacity, the chimney-sweep must prove by examination that he can sweep chimneys, and directly and indirectly the State requires evidence of qualification in many other spheres of life. From the standpoint of professional efficiency there may often be a good side to the State's concern that every citizen shall pass into life by the narrow road and strait gate which it has constructed, and by no other, but the effect is to convert the State into a sort of brick press, that works efficiently, it may be, but relentlessly, moulding people exactly to the form and size desired, but in the process crushing out of them all individuality. Even Bismarck, who knew the weak as well as the strong points of the Prussian State system as few others, said once that the German nation "is still a race of non-commissioned officers; everyone is eager to get the stripes. On an average every man in public life has only that degree of self-reliance which corresponds to his official hall-mark, to the conditions of his official rank, and to his orders. Exceptions to this are praiseworthy, but rare."

This widespread system of State control and regulation is further emphasized by the great mass and variety of restrictions which at so many points beset the citizens in their relations one with another, particularly in Prussia, where the national ideal of government is most logically and rigidly enforced. These restrictions are regarded as an essential part of the mechanism of government. In Anglo-Saxon countries such prohibitions are the exception; in Germany they face the citizen, young and old, at every turn, and from birth to death no one can ever be certain that he is keeping within the law without the exercise of persistent vigilance. Where the public authorities cease to prohibit, private persons take up the tale,

and everybody finds his highest delight in prohibiting somebody else. A Berlin three-monthly tenancy lease is as full of prohibitive and restrictive provisions, covering every imaginary contingency, as a chapter of Leviticus.

One of the most acute and discriminating of modern German thinkers, the late Dr. Friedrich Paulsen, attributed to the rigid, inflexible restraints imposed by the State in so many directions the peculiar susceptibility of young Germany to the unsettling doctrines of Nietzsche.

"How comes it," he asks, "that young Germany welcomes a writer of this kind as a revelation? There must exist a condition of mind to which it responds; for Nietzsche can teach nobody; he would himself have laughed loud if anyone had told him that he owed to him, the *fugitivus errans*, who never stood on firm ground himself, clear ideas and fixed convictions. What is this mood? I think it is just that from which Nietzsche suffers—intellectual anarchism; and the cause of this mood or depression (for it is a pathological condition) I deem to be the excess of pressure and compulsion to correctness to which everybody is exposed from youth to age. Intellectual anarchism is a reaction against the long-continued subjection imposed in the school, the Church, society, and the State. The effect of this ceaseless discipline is that correct ideas upon all matters, historical and political, religious and moral, literary and philological, to which we are trained by long schooling and many examinations, by public opinion and private admonitions, by patriotic festivals with their eternally reiterated eloquence, by seduction and threat, at last appear to us so stale, insipid, and intolerable that we tear up and throw from us everything, the correct opinions with the old truths, the conventional standards with the worn-out relics, and eventually logic and morality with them, give ourselves over to saturnalia of paradox, and celebrate a very feast of intellectual topsy-turvydom.

"It is strange that this same tame and well-disciplined nation reads and intoxicates itself with the writings of Nietzsche or with the passionately exciting rhetoric of the Social Democratic Press. How can

such a strange contradiction be explained? Or is it no contradiction at all? Are these not two aspects of the same phenomenon? Is it not that the tameness and discipline of our educated youth find compensation in these paroxysms of intellectual anarchism; just as the masses of the people, in return for all the pressure which they experience from the State and society, compensate themselves by the enjoyment of the unrestrained eloquence of their party Press? The picture offered by our people is certainly not edifying. A healthy, free people, conscious of its power, is not, on the one hand, so tame and cowed, nor, on the other hand, so wild in its literary pleasures. It is the dulled, anæmic, starved body which yearns for warmth and stupefaction by indulgence in strong drinks." *

One might add that the paroxysms of hatred and passion in which so many Germans are indulging for the benefit of this country at the present time simply imply the reaction against the restraints of decency in thought and intercourse which raw human nature invariably shows when its untamed instincts are rebuked and thwarted.

Bismarck claimed that "the Germans are less susceptible to national hatred than any other people." † However that may be, it would assuredly be wrong to judge the whole nation by these ugly manifestations, though they are singularly instructive and disconcerting as indications of a buried trait of the national character.

It is largely a consequence of the State's far-going interference with social relationships that in no other European country are people so divided into classes, and valued according to the class to which they belong, as in Germany, whose social system finds a parallel only in the caste system of India. The exclusive spirit of the military officer or Government official, who regards private civilians as citizens of a second or third class, is repeated in the hierarchy of titles and decorations; it is found in political life, where the high-and-dry Conserva-

* "Zur Ethik und Politik."

† "Der Deutsche ist dem Nationalhass an sich unzugänglicher als irgend eine andere Nation" (June 2, 1888).

tive thinks it beneath his dignity to meet the Radical in private intercourse ; it is carried into the lower ranks of society in crude and absurd forms ; and even the young men who form the students' clubs seriously class themselves according to the caps and ribbons they are entitled to wear, as though these insignia were a vital part of education. The artificial conventions, the foolish ideas of precedence, and the false notions of honour and worth which result from these class distinctions contribute neither to harmony nor dignity in social life.

But even within the limits of his emasculated life the State-regulated, State-compelled, State-harassed citizen is not allowed to think and act freely for himself, for the assumption is that the State exists for the very purpose of relieving the nation of the trouble of thinking and the responsibility of decision. This it does by means of a great bureaucracy, which is supposed to know intuitively what is good for the nation. And strange as it may seem, the nation has been schooled and disciplined so long and so thoroughly that to a large extent it has come to accept meekly this view of its incapacity.

" Divine honours," says a recent German writer, " are to-day required for the State and its servants in Germany. But the State is not a god, but merely an artificial machine served by trained and experienced mechanics, and the closest control of it is a supreme patriotic duty. Just as little is the State identical with the nation ; it lives upon the latter instead of the reverse."

This attitude of protest may characterize Germans of political enlightenment, and above all the intelligent working class, for this section of the population will, as a rule, be found to have come into contact and sympathy with English conceptions of government, but in Prussia such an attitude is still exceptional. North Germans in general appear to accept the tenet that docile response to the State's direction is a mark, if not a proof, of good citizenship. Such people have forgotten Spinoza's warning that " a State whose peace is caused by the apathy of its citizens, who allow themselves to be led like cattle, deserves rather the name of desert."

One of the most statesmanlike utterances ever spoken by Prince Bismarck was his remark to Jules Favre during the negotiations which followed the war of 1870–1871: "La patrie veut être servie, pas dominée." The sentiment was intended for French consumption, but it holds good equally for Germany, and to-day more so than ever. The elaborate machinery devised by the Sovereigns and Governments for perpetuating the old absolutism under constitutional forms has effectively deprived the nation of any form of genuine self-government and handed it over, body and spirit, to the control of a powerful and despotic State bureaucracy. German testimony in support of this statement might be quoted without end. One of recent date, from a source which must be regarded as leaning to the side of under-statement, may be sufficient in this place, for others will be found scattered through the pages of this book. Speaking on May 3, 1910, the National Liberal Deputy, Herr Schiffer, said:

"In my opinion the reform of government which we need is that we shall be governed less than now. And seeing that we live in an age of national economy, a great saving might certainly be exercised here. I do not doubt that the laws, decrees, ordinances, and regulations in currency would fill whole libraries. The institution of the police may be excellent for our nation, but we are in danger of being suffocated by all the love and care bestowed on us. Who can be sure as he lays himself down to sleep at night that he is not transgressing some police regulation or other? From the cradle to the grave law, justice, and the police accompany us at every step; nay, they look after us both for a few weeks before our birth and a few weeks after our death. And yet we boast that we are a mature people! Let us only govern ourselves. Everybody knows how much annoyance, misunderstanding, and discontent is caused by State interference in every direction."

What wonder that so many Germans seek and find congenial surroundings elsewhere than in their own country, that while the Swiss or the Italian emigrant is ambitious to return to his old home, the German emigrant

in leaving his fatherland leaves it for ever? Where possible he creates permanent settlements of his race, as in Brazil and Palestine, and failing that he allows himself to be assimilated by a stronger stock, as in the United States, but in either case wherever he goes he stays. The explanation of the looseness of the patriotic tie is that Germans who have had a breath of real freedom, as citizens of countries in which the love of freedom is regarded as a virtue and not a crime, can live no longer in the suffocating atmosphere of their own land. That is why in nearly all countries the largest section of the alien population is the German section, and why before the war broke out there were 80,000 Germans in the United Kingdom, whereas there were barely one-fifth as many British citizens—immigrants from the Colonies and India included—in Germany.

But other and more disastrous results remain to be noticed. Taught to regard the State as a sacrosanct authority set apart from and over them for their good, the peoples of Germany have to a large extent come to abdicate the right of private judgment in political matters. The weakness of their Legislatures and their inability to influence public policy have created in the nation a feeling of apathy and resignation, and tacitly, where not deliberately, it has fallen in with the view that the determination of State affairs is a matter for the Sovereigns and Governments. The inevitable result has been a marked decline in political capacity. More than ever people take their opinions on authority, forgetting that in abdicating the duty of private judgment they are sacrificing their ability and fitness to discharge the obligations of citizenship, without divesting themselves of moral responsibility for the acts done in the national name.

"Is it not in the highest degree surprising," asked Professor Otto Harnack in the review *März* several years ago, "that intelligent and highly educated men to-day not seldom express opinions on political questions which betray no trace of connected political thought, but merely rest on belief in authority, or on purely personal inclinations and caprice?"

II. The Censorship of Opinion

There is general agreement in Germany that since the present Emperor came to power the tendency to magnify the position of the State and to subordinate the individual has greatly increased, and while this is the case in the Empire generally, it is particularly the case in Prussia. Professor Otto Harnack, referring to the "political self-negation of German intelligence," says: "Since constitutional life was introduced in Germany it was never so easy as in recent years to rule from above, in spite of the existing constitutional forms. There is in the ascendant a progressive subordination of personal character under the pressure of the political authorities, and individual judgment, self-determination of life, and frank confession of personal views are becoming ever rarer. The opinion is widely prevalent that it is a national duty to regard everything in one's own country as excellent, or, if that be not possible, to avoid any expression of discontent, in order not to provide grist for the mill of the anti-national parties, or to suggest unfavourable judgments of Germany abroad. The consciousness that only self-criticism can prevent stagnation and that respect for truth and fidelity of conviction are likewise national duties has to a large extent disappeared."

So far has the exaltation of the State and the official mind gone that the avowal of opinions at variance with those stamped and put in currency by authority has come to be regarded as a sign of wavering loyalty and equivocal patriotism. Bismarck said towards the end of his life: "To-day the country is governed by unpractical theorists and inexperienced office-hunters, whose submissiveness is the only gauge by which the ruling bureaucracy measures their thoroughness and utility. In this respect we Prussians are much worse off than the Bavarians. With us in Prussia everybody opens and shuts his eyes in emulation for the *cornucopia* of the Ministry." Free men, free minds, free judgments are discouraged as inconvenient; any hesitation to fall in with the views prevailing in "the highest circles"

ranks in official life as a misdemeanour, and in public life as at least a disadvantage which may entail social penalties of an awkward kind.

Officials are expected as a matter of course to take their opinions from above. Nominally, they may not be party politicians at all, yet they may support the Government policy and party as openly and as vigorously as they like, for the Government is supposed by a ludicrous fiction to be above parties, though in fact bound to the Junker interest by an alliance which has lasted for half a century. The only men who escape suspicion are the "safe" men who either hold or parade the opinions sanctioned above or have no opinions at all. The right thing is to be a Conservative; a Liberal may be barely tolerated, though no more; but if out of a mistaken desire to be true to his convictions a Prussian official should betray Socialist sympathies he seals his own doom, for his career and with it perhaps his livelihood are at an end.

The official censorship exercised over political opinion is no less systematic in the means it employs. Sometimes it rests on a system of common espionage, which is all the more intolerable to its victims since these are educated and cultured men. Documented or not, a *dossier* exists for every man in which answers have been obtained to such questions as: "What are his opinions?" "Is he prominent in politics?" (meaning politics not of the Government sort). "Has he a past?" "Can anything be said against him?"

This system of terrorism is specially Prussian and is enforced most thoroughly in the case of officers in the State service, from high to low, but it applies equally to all officials who are in any way liable to Government supervision. Not infrequently able municipal officials are refused confirmation in the positions to which they have been appointed by the vote of the elective authority solely owing to their too progressive opinions. In a notorious case at Königsberg, where a high official of this service was kept out of office for a long time by the Government President supported by the Minister of

the Interior in Berlin, the fact came to light that the objections raised were based upon secret reports sent in by the police and based on groundless tittle-tattle collected in the by-ways where slander and malice consort. In another case a municipal officer was refused confirmation because he had been heard to say that "under certain circumstances he would give his vote to a Social Democrat." It happened once that the Prussian Government refused to confirm the appointment of a Deputy Mayor of Berlin because twenty years before, while a reserve officer, he had taken part in a political election on the Liberal side. Quite recently a Polish notary of Thorn asked the advice of his judicial superior whether he might abstain from voting seeing that for conscientious reasons he could only support a candidate of his own nationality. The answer was: "A Prussian official is bound to exercise the franchise and it is also his duty to vote 'national,' which means to give his vote to the German candidate. If he cannot do this conscientiously, he should draw the honourable conclusion and lay down his office." The notary resigned rather than be unfaithful to his convictions.

Of the effect of this tyranny of governmental opinion upon the bureaucracy Dr. Paul Rohrbach, himself at one time a high Colonial official, writes:

"Far too much encouragement is given from above to a mode of thought which regards an uncritical devotion to the will of the highest authority as a special sign of reliability and patriotism. The results must be that perfunctory talents and people without principles of their own hold the field, and that men of character will go where they will be able to retain their independence. There is no reason to believe that we have fallen irrevocably into this downward path as yet, but the tendency exists. Can it be doubted that for this reason the higher positions in the State service are beginning to be forsaken by men of strong personality?" *

There must be few Prussian universities whose recent annals do not contain illustrations of the Government intolerance which cripples intellectual freedom and

* "Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt."

penalizes honest conviction, while some could tell of teachers forced upon them for no other reason than they had proved convenient tools of Government policy. To take one instance only of the former kind, in 1902 the Breslau Professor of Jurisprudence, Dr. W. Schücking, in the course of a lecture on the question whether the succession to the throne could be regulated by law, remarked that he would "pass over the doctrine of monarchy by God's grace as being a non-juristic question." He was denounced by a hearer—a fact which tells its own tale—in a Berlin Conservative newspaper, and soon after received a warning from the Ministry of Education containing the reminder that he "might teach what he wished, but he must always reckon with the possibility of his services being no longer required." Later interferences with his liberty led this independent-minded teacher to leave Prussia for one of the more tolerant German States. The brother of this professor, the mayor of an important town in the north-west of Prussia, was removed from office solely because he had criticized the Government too freely. On the other hand, a political pamphleteer, in recognition of his services in championing the Government's repressive policy in the Polish districts, was several years ago made a professor of Berlin University against the protests of his own faculty and over the heads of the university authorities, who were not consulted about his appointment.

The result of this State control of public thought and of the nation's too willing emasculation of its own faculty of judgment is that there is no independent national opinion in Germany to-day, for that which is called national opinion is merely an inchoate, unreasoning, official sentiment, manufactured like any other product of the State machine. The nation has handed over its mind and conscience to the Government, than which no less safe custodian for treasures so precious could be found. The effect of this spiritual self-immolation of an entire nation we have seen of late in the fact that it is impossible to prove to the German people that their Government is capable of doing wrong.

Another collateral result has been the perversion of the idea of patriotism. This, too, has been so officialized and governmentalized until it has lost the old idealistic meaning. As the State machine manufactures opinion, so it manufactures patriotism, or rather the spirit and sentiment which do service for it under a system which identifies patriotism with slavish acceptance of the official policy, and loyalty with mechanical adulation of the Sovereign. To-day patriotism is " taught " in the schools as part of the recognized curriculum, like grammar and geography; not only by means of a skilfully devised rotation of national celebrations, but by the systematic perversion of history. " At the last reform of education," says a recent German writer, " the hours devoted to history lessons were for national reasons increased, and the school year was punctuated with national commemoration days." Only last year an able writer in the *Neue Rundschau* (June 1913) protested against this degradation of one of the purest of emotions in the following words :

" When at the change of the moon the patriotic master of ceremonies, fortified by chronicles and calendars, announces another national commemoration a shudder runs through all those Germans (and they are many and not the worst) who do not display their love of fatherland like a price-list on their necks. For twenty-five years no reserve rights of personality have remained either in political or social matters ; everybody must fall in with the prescribed forms and take part in the festival-mongering even though he be suffocated in so doing. The calendar is scrutinized for every possibility of patriotic exploitation, and woe to the man who seeks to evade the command to rouse himself into national enthusiasm, for he is deemed to be unpatriotic, is shunned and outlawed, and if he does not wish to end his days as a plucked hen in the street he must choose between martyrdom and political hypocrisy. This patriotic junketing has become commonplace, and it cannot be genuine. The drilling to patriotism by festive indulgence and oratory, to the accompaniment of flags and lamps, has robbed the natural feeling of devotion to the fatherland of all seriousness

and spontaneity. To freely dedicate oneself in gratitude to the fatherland as to God has become impossible in Germany. By means of regulations, instruction, and apologetic justifications, patriotism is to-day taught by zealots like a common school lesson with a mercilessly rigid catechism. Love to the fatherland is made mechanical, it is drilled into people like a dead disbelieved religion, and the few pure heroisms of the past are misused in the service of one-sided political or even of dynastic purposes."

No wonder that it is a common remark in Germany to-day that, in spite of all the official endeavours to make people loyal and well-affected by machinery, there is less genuine monarchical sentiment than half a century ago, and that on the part of large sections of the population patriotism itself has lost in depth and seriousness.

III. The Influence of Lutheranism

A well-known German political leader, the late Dr. Ludwig Bamberger, once spoke of the Prussian State Church as "one of the institutions retained by the Prussian nobility and gentry as the inalienable appanage of their class." It has certainly been of great assistance to the rulers of modern Germany that the theory of the State, as the repository of all authority, has behind it the sanction of the great Protestant Reformer, Luther, and the body of religious and political doctrine which became, and remains, identified with his name. The degree to which German political thought has been influenced, consciously and unconsciously, by the national religion can hardly be exaggerated. In emancipating the nation from the Papacy the German Reformation stopped short of those great political changes which came about in this country as a result of the parallel movement. Luther asserted the State's independence of papal influence, but he reasserted and emphasized the subordination of the individual citizen to the State. "The real achievement of the Reformation," says Treitschke, whose conception of the State found much support in Luther's teaching, "was that it gave back to the State its rightful place and

function "—that is, in transferring the seat of authority from the ecclesiastical to the secular arm.

The tie between the State and the Reformed Church itself never underwent a serious strain, for the German Reformation remained throughout under the direction of the Princes. Hence no transformation followed like that which occurred in Great Britain, where Protestantism became identified with the view that the State should stand aside and regard religion as the private matter of the individual.

Apart from the strength of tradition, Luther's relationship to the Princes was so intimate and his indebtedness to them so great that the idea of setting up Reformed Churches otherwise than on a State basis and subject to princely regulation did not appeal to him. The German rulers were not slow to take full advantage of the Reformer's teaching, which played directly into their hands, strengthening and riveting upon the German peoples the autocratic conception of government which had seemed for a time to be threatened. In practice the change brought about by the Reformation in North and Central Germany, where Lutheranism gained its strongest hold, was that the individual merely passed out of the power of a despotic Church to that of a despotic State; he gained a shadowy right of private judgment from the one in order to lose it to the other. One spiritual pope was dethroned, and scores of secular popes were set up in his place.

It was different in Rhenish and South Germany, where the Reformation owed more to the influence of Calvin than of Luther, a difference which has been illustrated ever since by the freer political development of these parts of the country. For in opposition to Lutheranism, with its doctrines of State supremacy in religious matters and of centralized ecclesiastical authority, Calvinism stood for the independent jurisdiction of each religious community; and where Lutheranism subordinated personal judgment to the State authority, so weakening the sense of individual and collective responsibility in public affairs, Calvinism emphasized the responsibility of every citizen both for his own and the State's actions.

That these divergent conceptions have helped to bring about the different political development of North and South Germany cannot be doubted; together with the influence of French thought and political movements the Calvinistic conception of religion has contributed greatly to create the freer spirit of the South and its institutions. The action of Calvinism on the thought of South Germany was, though far less strong, the same in kind with that exerted in England and Scotland. In both these countries the Reformation asserted for all time the right of private judgment and the principle of personal responsibility in public and national life. Hence there has never been with us that possibility of an open divorce between public and private ethics which is a direct and almost an inevitable result of the Prussian theory of the State.

In the book already named Dr. Paul Rohrbach confirms this view, though in relation to a different argument. He writes:

"Lutheranism was from the beginning a confession of the Princes and estates, and it has remained until to-day so true to the original spirit which has dominated it that in the name of no other Christian Church has religion been so entirely subordinated to the service of the principle of authority in the interest of the ruling classes as in this Church. The religious impotence of the German Catholic and Protestant Churches is rooted in the fact that both—and particularly the latter—are agreed in occupying the *rôle* of servant to the dominant State principle." *

The Constitutions of the Empire and of Prussia declare religion to be a "private matter," but it is not so regarded in practice. Religious instruction contrary to the convictions of their parents is forced upon the Protestant sects, and repeated royal promises to redress the special grievances of this section of the population have never been fulfilled. Explaining the legal relationship between State and Church in Prussia, Prince Bismarck once said: "The Protestant Church at first enjoyed only right of hospitality in the Prussian State, and from that position it gradually became a co-proprietor of the house, but the original

* "Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt."

owner has always been the State." Hence the King is the *summus episcopus*, the Church is rigidly governed by a Consistorium appointed by him, and the clergy are regarded as much State officers as the administrative bureaucracy, and the same compliance and obedience are expected of them.

Surprise was felt in this country that one of the first declarations of Germany's "white conscience" and innocency of purpose in the present war came from a body of Protestant theologians and clergymen. No one can have shared this surprise who knows how dependent the State Church is upon the Government in Germany and how little freedom the clergy possess, or dare to claim. Only last year (1913) a small band of brave clergymen and theological professors issued a manifesto protesting against excessive armaments and calling upon their brethren to be more outspoken in the advocacy of peace and peace policies. "It must be lamented with pain," they said, "that hitherto only an insignificant part of the German Protestant theologians has publicly advocated international peace, and that we have left this practical command of Christianity to the anti-Church Social Democracy. Not only the prestige of our churches but the reality of our faith requires this proof of a spirit that is without fear of men, and of the power of our love of mankind."

It would not be true to say that the subordination of the Church to the State is to the mind of the whole of the clergy. On the contrary, the humiliating dependence of their position is felt to be galling by an increasing number of the younger men, and not a few have emphasized their convictions by seeking relief in secular callings. Dr. Friedrich Naumann, one of the leaders of the Radical parliamentary party, Herr Paul Göhre, the Socialist politician and author, and Gustav Frensen, the novelist, were all at one time clergymen of the Prussian State Protestant Church, but left it for the sake of greater freedom.

CHAPTER IV

"ABSOLUTISM UNDER CONSTITUTIONAL FORMS"

It has been shown that the distinctive German conception of the State discourages individuality, paralyses private judgment, cripples independence, stifles freedom of thought, and destroys the sense of personal responsibility. It makes of the individual citizens mere stage supernumeraries in the great drama of national life, with no function to perform save to take up the positions and repeat the gestures assigned to them, and for the rest to serve as a background for the true players, who are the Sovereign and his agents, the military and the bureaucracy.

That is where the doctrine leads, yet the doctrine alone does not produce these results. For a doctrine, after all, is only a signpost telling the way. Its influence is thus indirect, and to be effective in producing the desired ends it must have the assistance of the proper auxiliaries. One such auxiliary is the crypto-absolutistic system of government under which the German peoples are given constitutions which mean little or nothing and parliaments which do not govern.*

I. The Transition from Absolutism to Constitutionalism

Probably to most of the past friends of Germany—the true Germany, Germany as it will be again when it has returned to its right mind—the prospect of a real

* The greater part of this chapter appeared in the *Contemporary Review* for December 1914, and is reproduced by permission of the editor.

increase in political liberty in the early future will seem the one bright spot in its present outlook. History has a strange way of repeating itself, and it is interesting to recall the fact that the earliest instalments of political self-government obtained by the German peoples were given by their rulers as a reward for the sacrifices demanded of them during the great War of Emancipation just a hundred years ago. The King of Prussia then withheld that reward by a breach of faith in its way quite as flagitious as the recent tearing in pieces of the Belgian neutrality treaty of 1839.

The Prussian nation has no reason to look back with feelings either of satisfaction or gratitude upon its long struggle with the Crown for liberties which are the birthright of the free nations of Western Europe, for the fruits yielded have been scanty and unsubstantial. It is worth while recalling some of the facts of this struggle, for they will show where the contending forces stand to-day, and will help us better to visualize the difficulties which block the way to any serious advance of the popular cause.*

The history of constitutionalism in Prussia is largely a history of broken faith on the part of the Sovereigns. Human ingratitude surely was never displayed more ignobly than in the treatment of the Prussian people by its King, Frederick William III, after the War of Emancipation. During the war the King solemnly promised the nation, in recognition of its unparalleled sacrifices, direct participation in State affairs; it was bidden to

* It seems desirable to say that the terms Liberalism and Conservatism in application to German conditions cannot be identified with the ideas which they connote in this country. In Germany Liberalism represents broadly the more elementary implications of constitutional life as understood in countries in which the Constitution is something more than "the fig-leaf of absolutism," while Conservatism in the Prussian sense implies almost mediæval obscurantism. It will be understood that nothing said in this chapter or elsewhere in this book can be assumed to have reference to English political or party questions, since with these I am in no way concerned.

keep before its eyes the pledge of freedom at home, as well as the hope of release from a foreign yoke. After the fall of Napoleon the German Princes, assembled in Vienna in 1815, set their hands to a Convention by which they formed themselves into a Confederation, and also pledged themselves to introduce constitutions and national legislatures in their several States.

With a wisdom abundantly justified by the event, the rulers of Weimar, Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden promptly fulfilled their word, and other minor Princes soon followed suit; with a short-sightedness the evil consequences of which have persisted to the present day, the rulers of Prussia and Austria refused to keep their promise. Baron vom Stein had gained the Prussian King's endorsement of the idea of constitutional life as early as 1807, when Prussia's fortunes were at their lowest ebb, but that weak and unstable Sovereign, whose chief claim to remembrance is that he was the husband of Queen Louise, forgot in the time of success the lesson learned in the time of adversity. Writing in June 1815, Stein said: "Austria favours the resistance of the Princes to the establishment of national assemblies. Prussia, too, holds back from yielding to the wishes of a people whose incalculable sacrifices have proved its fidelity." Even Blücher's colleague Gneisenau joined in the general outcry. "The necessity of giving Prussia a constitution soon—at once," he wrote to Ernst Moritz Arndt, "I have demonstrated by word and writing; the very dictates of statecraft demand it." Gneisenau had long been a friend of the Liberal movement, and had for his pains drawn upon himself the King's ill-will. In a letter to Clausewitz, dated October 1813, he tells how the King had heaped insult upon him and adds: "But you see how deeply rooted is the King's antipathy to all those who do not share his political sentiments. However, as soon as this holy war is over I shall leave his army and will rather eat the bread of poverty than press myself upon this ungrateful ruler."

Nothing was done. For Prussia the Leipzig of national liberty was to prove the Jena of political liberty; once

the usurper had been ejected from German territory, the King disregarded both his promises to his subjects and his pledge to the rest of the German Princes. Before long all political movements were placed under ban, and many of the Liberal publicists and poets who had done so much to inspire the nation in the dark years which intervened between Prussia's fall and rise fell into disgrace. Popular liberty was hemmed into the old limits: the old police *régime* was continued and intensified; the printing press was subjected to drastic control; in a word, the disturbed absolutistic State was revived in all its rigour. The King had already, in 1813, dismissed the theological professor Schleiermacher from his chair in Berlin, and when later he published a harmless political article suggesting the lines on which German unity should be won, he was ordered to leave Berlin in forty-eight hours as having "shown a tendency which I cannot permit."

The later "persecution of the demagogues" is one of the darkest pages in Prussian political history. For these "demagogues" were not fanatical agitators, but men of moderate views and of lofty character, scholars, statesmen, poets, publicists, even soldiers—the fine intellectual flower of the nation. Even the patriot Arndt was dismissed from his professorship at Bonn and his review was suppressed. General von Hüser writes in his Recollections: "Anyone who expressed either a Christian or a German sentiment was esteemed a demagogue and a corrupter of the people." It even happened in 1824 that the republication of Fichte's noble "Addresses to the German Nation" was officially prohibited.

It was the middle of the century before Prussia received its first Constitution, and it was given under pressure of fear by another King. "Am I not bound as an honourable man," wrote Frederick William IV in 1845, "to do what my father promised?" Certainly he was slow enough to give proof of his honour. He had been on the throne five years when he made this avowal, and four more years passed before he redeemed the broken pledge. A Constitution was given and a Parliament created, and

conceived though both were in a reactionary spirit, they have remained unaltered till the present day. Later the King would fain have annulled the Constitution had he dared, but in default he tried to make constitutional government ridiculous, and to the end of his reign he browbeat everyone who ventured to remind him of this breach with the autocracy of old. Alexander von Humboldt wrote in 1853 : " The King hates and despises his Ministers. He is even at times pleased to act the part of a constitutional King by repudiating with a sort of malicious satisfaction, in embarrassing circumstances, every responsibility of his own." Finally, he left behind him a sealed document in which he enjoined upon each of his successors the duty of overthrowing the Constitution which he had unwillingly granted. This document continued in existence until the accession of the present King, who (as was disclosed for the first time two years ago) caused it to be destroyed. Frederick William IV was insane in his later years, but his apologists have never claimed that he was insane when he penned this perfidious document. On the contrary, the Junker party contends that it was the sanest thing he ever did.

When in 1858 a Regent was appointed in the person of Prince William—later the Emperor-King William I—the liberal-minded Duke Ernst of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha did his best to win Prussia from the old ways. As " a German Prince and a plain German citizen " he addressed to the new ruler a statesmanlike appeal in which he urged him to throw over the feudal reactionaries, and unite the progressive political, military, and intellectual forces of the nation in a moderate party, so increasing the influence of Prussia and enabling it to make " a moral conquest " of Germany.

" Prussia stands at the parting of the ways," he said. " What if Prussia should hold back and the feudal party should again acquire governmental influence ? " He warned the Regent that if the hopes of the middle party were disappointed there was a certain prospect of its dissolution, with the result that the right wing would strengthen the party of reaction and the left make

common cause with the subversive elements in society, leaving a weak and ineffective remnant incapable of exerting any active influence on public affairs. By setting itself at the head of the progressive forces, he said, Prussia might assert for itself an honourable "moral ascendancy" in Germany, but, failing such an ascendancy, it would be able to count only on "military and diplomatic conquests," and that at the cost of great moral and material sacrifice. The advice was not followed, and the Duke's remarkable prophecy was fulfilled in every detail in later years. Soon afterwards Bismarck was called to the Regent's side, bringing with him schemes of army reorganization and dreams of conquest by "blood and iron." Under his influence, and in the prosecution of these aims, King William I violated the Constitution he had sworn to observe by governing without a budget during the four years 1862–6. In so doing he threw himself on the support of the reactionary forces in the nation, and these have ever since kept the upper hand.

There has been no violent infraction of the Constitution since, but everyone who is acquainted with contemporary Prussian history knows how again and again the clear intentions and even the expressed principles of the Constitution are overridden by the large body of Cabinet Orders, decrees, and other royal dispositions—many dating from the times of pure absolutism—which play so important a part in Prussian jurisdiction, particularly in the sphere of military and educational administration. It may be recalled that when last year the redoubtable Colonel von Reutter illegally superseded the civil authorities of Zabern, in Alsace, imprisoned a host of civilians and State officials indiscriminately, and set up his machine-guns in the streets, he justified his actions by reference to a Prussian Cabinet Order of 1820.

II. The Impotence of German Parliaments

In considering what may be the course of German political movements under the influence of the war it is necessary to be on our guard against the besetting

illusion of ardent faith, that of believing and seeing what we wish to believe and see. All that can be done with safety is to judge the future in the light of past events, to try to discern clearly defined tendencies, to estimate their direction and strength, and on the data so ascertained to venture a speculation rather than a prophecy, always remembering that every great social and political movement is the resultant of a variety of forces, some of them subtle, impalpable, and incommensurable, and most of them inconstant and liable at any moment to be checked or deflected.

The danger of self-deception and over-confidence will be diminished if we bear in mind what is now the effective seat of political power under the German constitutional systems. Not only by tradition, but in constitutional theory and in fact, the position of the Sovereigns is supreme and unassailable. In the case of Prussia in particular the Constitution was not adopted by the Legislature as an expression of its deliberate will in the same sense as the Parliament Act was adopted in this country. It was given to the nation by the King purely as an act of grace, and not as a right, and even if both Houses of the National Diet were to agree in demanding far-going alterations—a hypothesis which must be regarded as inconceivable, in view of the composition of these Chambers —it would still rest with the King to say whether he would assent or not, for his veto is unrestricted.

How impotent and ineffectual German Parliaments still are will be understood if the leading features common to most of them are briefly stated. The predominant parliamentary form is a Diet of two Chambers, each possessed of equal power, but subject to an absolute veto on the part of the Government, which means the Crown, since Ministers are both appointed and removable by the Sovereign, and neither of the legislative bodies can exercise any directive control over them. In the case of the Imperial Diet the place of the normal Upper Chamber is taken by the Federal Council, composed altogether of plenipotentiaries representing the Princes, who thus similarly exercise a determining influence over all legis-

lation and policy. In every State the executive power resides in the Sovereign—in the case of the Empire, the Emperor—whether it be exercised through a single Minister, as in the case of little States like Anhalt and Lippe, or through eight or nine, as in the case of Bavaria and Prussia respectively. The Sovereign can also send the Diet about its business at any moment if he is dissatisfied with its composition or its acts, and the Emperor and the Federal Council together possess the same power in relation to the Reichstag.

It follows that though the Parliaments are elected on franchises of different democratic value, their effective power over legislation and policy is really negative. That is, while they cannot pass laws unless the Government agree, they are similarly able to veto Government measures. For practical purposes a German Legislature is merely a discussion club, with the mortifying difference that though it may end its discussions by adopting solemn resolutions, these resolutions cannot be executed unless graciously endorsed by the Sovereign. A German Parliament achieves little on its own initiative, because it has no scope for the exercise of creative power, and is treated as a mere adjunct of the Crown ; it is accepted as a more or less necessary instrument for the execution of the royal will, but it is not expected to have a will of its own or allowed to assert one.

It would be easy to illustrate by the weighty protests of responsible German politicians the intense dissatisfaction which is caused by this intolerable situation. Thus, Dr. F. Naumann, one of the ablest leaders of the Progressive party, so lately as January 1914 described the impotent position of the Imperial Diet itself in the following words :

" We on the Left are altogether in favour of the parliamentary *régime*, by which we mean that the Reichstag cannot for ever remain in a position of subordination. Why does the Reichstag sit at all, why does it pass resolutions, if behind it is a waste-paper basket into which these resolutions are thrown ? The problem is to change the impotence of the Reichstag into some sort of power."

Further, he said :

" The man who compared this House to a hall of echoes was not far wrong. To those who are accustomed to do practical work in life it appears a mere waste of time to devote themselves to this difficult and monotonous mechanism. For what can the Reichstag do ? It can accept and amend laws ; it can criticize and control the Administration ; here and there it can make improvements ; it can call to order the policeman who enters a meeting at which he has no right to be present ; and it can regulate a hundred things that need to be regulated. In that respect the Reichstag plays the part of an assistant in transacting the everyday work of the nation. But when one asks the question, What part has the Reichstag played in German history as a whole ? it will be seen that the part is a very limited one."

" Many millions among us," said Deputy Dr. Frank in the Reichstag on January 23, 1914, " feel it a burning shame that while Germans achieve great things in trade and industry, in politics they are deprived of rights."

It is Prussia more than any other part of Germany, or all the rest of Germany together, which is responsible for the semi-absolutistic spirit in which that country is still ruled, and by Prussia must be understood the Emperor-King, with his archaic pretensions of divine right, backed up by the military and bureaucratic caste and by the Junker party, from which that caste is chiefly drawn, and which controls Government policy in both Houses of the National Diet. The Junkers have never frankly recognized the new order which came into being when in 1849 King Frederick William IV capitulated to constitutionalism, and they would subvert it to-day if they could. Moreover, the reactionary spirit which these irreconcilables display in the Parliament which they dominate and discredit they carry into the Parliament of the Empire and endeavour to translate into the policy and legislation of the Imperial Government. It is not long since a typical Junker, one Herr von Oldenburg, declared in the Imperial Diet that " the Emperor should be in a position at any moment to say to a lieutenant, ' Take ten

men and shut up the Reichstag.'" It is significant of the mentality of this party that the Conservative President of the Diet did not think it necessary to protest against this insult to the Reichstag and to the whole German nation. It was, in fact, left to the party of the Extreme Left to assert the dignity of the House.

On the other hand, Liberalism itself is not without blame for the present condition of German constitutional life. The part played by the Liberal party for nearly half a century has been neither heroic nor dignified, and certainly it has not led to any very striking results. "Is it not remarkable," asked a writer in the *Neue Rundschau* not long ago (June 1913), "that we must think always of the revolutionary year of 1848—the time of those purest, most idealistic, but most impotent hopes for German political life—when we talk of honest Liberalism?" One has only to compare the leaders of Liberalism now with those of sixty years ago in order to see how great has been the decline from the definite, clear-cut principles held when Liberalism first came upon the parliamentary scene. During the Conflict Time, when the Prussian Diet opposed the Government because it dared to govern without a constitutionally approved budget, Liberalism was intensely in earnest, and as a consequence was in complete sympathy with the nation, insomuch that a Liberal Diet was elected and re-elected to assert the right which Bismarck had violated. It is difficult to believe that the Conservative party in the Prussian Lower House, which to-day numbers over 200 in an Assembly of 442, formed at the beginning of the sixties of last century an insignificant body first of fifteen and later of eleven members.

It is worth while recalling the words of burning indignation which a breach of faith by King and Government called from a foremost Liberal—who was also a professor—in those brave days. Speaking in the Prussian Diet on May 5, 1865, Rudolf Gneist, the constitutional historian, said of this infraction of the Constitution:

"This reorganized army with the Cain mark of a broken oath upon its forehead, achieved at the cost of the viola-

tion of the Constitution, can never be a permanent institution in this country so long as divine justice rules over us. What I say is the legal truth, the moral truth, the religious truth, as you must confess yourselves if religion is at all a reality amongst us."

In the end the Government sought an indemnity, and it was then that the Liberal party made its fatal mistake. In a letter of Alexander von Humboldt's on the Prussian constitutional movement occurs the cryptic saying: "It is not the momentary successes but the failures that advance the popular cause here." The very hour of the apparent triumph of Liberalism marked the beginning of its decline. Elated with the Government's capitulation, the parliamentary party allowed itself to be put off its guard; its very magnanimity was its undoing, for it gave the Government an absolution that was genuine, whereas Bismarck's penitence was altogether unreal. Here Bismarck asserted his characteristic craft with complete success. He has related that the King himself was opposed to the passing of an Act of Indemnity, and that he agreed only after his Minister had persuaded him that it would be tantamount to a repudiation by the Diet of its own acts. The King and Bismarck had broken the Constitution in their desire to create a large army, for purposes to be disclosed at the proper time. Far-seeing Liberals like Johann Jacoby and Virchow saw in this lawless act the coming menace of Prussian military domination, and they refused to make peace at any price with the Constitution-breakers. The majority of Liberals, however, were of a different mind. The successful wars with Denmark and Austria seemed to set the seal of justification upon the doctrine that "questions of right are questions of might," and intoxicated by Prussia's military prowess and its growing political influence, the protesting Constitutionalists of 1862 began first to wonder at the resistance they had offered and at last to be ashamed of it. Heinrich von Sybel in his history recalls as mistaken and trivial the stand which he and his colleagues made in those days for the rights of the Legislature as against the Crown.

Giants have to be fought by giants, and Liberalism had few leaders fit to be pitted against the man of "blood and iron"; but it was the denial of its own doctrine and of its very *raison d'être* far more than lack of powerful champions that first set Liberalism on the path of decline, and has made it in more recent years so ineffectual as a parliamentary force. More and more the parliamentary party has allowed itself to be carried along by the current of reaction, until it might seem no longer able to give to the progressive forces in the country at large a clear and emphatic lead.

And yet the idea, which is widely prevalent, that the German nation as a whole is hopelessly anti-Liberal is quite erroneous. For this idea the reactionary spirit too often characteristic of German policy and legislation, as carried on by Governments over whose action the peoples and Parliaments have no control, is to a large extent responsible. "The constitutional machinery of Germany is monarchical and conservative, but the soul of the nation is democratic and progressive," wrote a thoughtful German publicist, Professor Karl Lamprecht, in a recent number of the *International*. The truest mirror of German national sentiment is offered by the results of the periodical elections to the Imperial Diet, chosen as it is by manhood suffrage. Thus, in the General Election of 1912, 12,208,000 voters took part, and of the great political parties the Social Democrats polled 34·8 per cent. of all votes cast, the Radicals 12·3 per cent., and the National Liberals 13·6 per cent., while opposed to them the Conservatives and Imperialists polled 14·7 per cent. and the Ultramontanes 16·4 per cent. Thus the parties broadly representing progressive tendencies polled nearly two-thirds of all the electors, and those standing for reaction or stagnation less than one-third; the balance fell to half a dozen minor "fractions," professing more or less non-party aims.

Owing to the fact that there has been no redistribution of seats since the Diet was created, in spite of an enormous increase of population and of a momentous change in the incidence of population as between urban and rural

districts, the actual representation of parties in no way corresponds to the foregoing figures. If representation were proportionate to voting power, the Socialists would, to-day, have 139 seats instead of 110, the Radicals 51 instead of 43, and the National Liberals 54 instead of 44. On the other hand, the representation of the two Conservative parties would be reduced from 69 to 61, and that of the Centre party from 93 to 67. In other words, the parties of the Left would control 244 votes instead of 197, and those of the Right only 128 votes instead of 162.

III. The Need for a Parliamentary Régime

In this glaring paradox, that the practical influence of German Liberalism on legislation and public policy is altogether inferior to the volume and strength of Liberal sentiment in the country, lies the kernel of the constitutional problem. In considering the changes needed in order to bring the Parliaments and peoples into greater harmony, the Prussian question cannot be separated from the Imperial question. For so intimate is the relationship between Prussia and the Empire that the spirit which dominates the Executive and directs public policy in the Diet of the Monarchy is a serious factor with which the Imperial Government and Legislature have constantly to reckon.

The Constitution of the Empire does not expressly require that the Prussian Minister-President shall also be the Imperial Chancellor, though it provides that the King of Prussia (as Emperor) shall appoint the Chancellor. This dual arrangement is, however, in sympathy with the entire structure and spirit of Imperial government; it tends to administrative convenience, and the two offices have in fact almost invariably been held by the same person. But the harmonious working of such an arrangement presupposes the existence in the two Parliaments of a certain unity in party interests, relationships, and conditions, and this has never existed. Thanks to the plutocratic three-class franchise—even to Bismarck the "most miserable franchise in the world"—which

debars the masses of the people from representation, and to the equally unfair distribution of seats, the Conservative-Junker party is able to maintain a permanent ascendancy in the Prussian Diet, and the policy of the Government is dictated by a party of reaction and privilege. On the other hand, the Reichstag is elected by manhood suffrage, and in consequence it reflects on the whole progressive tendencies, now weaker, now stronger, yet always offering vivid contrast to the Junkerism of North-East Germany. Thus it frequently happens that Ministers speak with two voices and apparently two convictions; measures which they advocate in the Prussian Diet they are compelled to disown in the Imperial Diet, and *vice versa*. This conflict of sentiment leads to perpetual friction between the Imperial Government and the Reichstag, the great majority of whose members have no interest whatever in the immoral bargains by which the Prussian Executive from time to time pacifies the ascendancy party whose tool it is, and warmly resent the endeavour of that party to assert its intolerable pretensions in the Parliament of the whole nation.

The only hope of ending this conflict, which is regarded by all unprejudiced politicians as a stain upon the reputation of the Reichstag and as prejudicial to the reputation and influence of the Empire abroad, is the assimilation of the Prussian franchise to that of the Empire, thus affording some guarantee that both Legislatures will reflect the dominant sentiment of the electorate. But that reform, while it would do much to bring the two Legislatures and their Governments into line, would not of itself make the German constitutional system one whit more real than it is at the present moment, and would not satisfy the nation in its present mood. For so long as Ministers are the nominees of the Crown, and can be imposed upon the Legislatures without their sanction and retained against their will, Germany cannot hope for emancipation from its obsolete and exasperating system of government—a system which Gneist long ago described as "absolutism under constitutional forms."

Nothing short of the substitution of genuine parlia-

mentary government for the present discredited personal *régime* will satisfy the aspirations of the modern democracy, and give to the German nation the chance of striking at notorious evils which have now brought it to the verge of disaster and have caused it to forfeit the sympathy of the entire civilized world.

The change looks a formidable one, yet all that is necessary to bring it about is the practical enforcement of the principle of "Ministerial responsibility." This principle is already acknowledged in the Constitutions alike of the States and the Empire, but it has never been acted upon. Prince Bismarck put it in the Imperial Constitution as a pretty piece of ornamentation in the hope of pleasing constitutional lawyers of the type of Gneist. He never intended that it should be applied, however, and it has remained a pious fiction from that time to this. The only responsibility covered by the principle as it stands is, in fact, the responsibility of Ministers for the Sovereign's personal acts; it does not recognize the power of a parliamentary majority or of Parliament as a whole to call a Minister or a Government to account by the methods known to constitutional practice in Western countries.

Recent political history has repeatedly shown that the doctrine of Ministerial responsibility as interpreted by the German Emperor and his Government simply means that the former enjoys the privilege of making mischief by his indiscretions and of leaving his Chancellor to set things right. When such episodes occur the Reichstag debates vehemently; the Press of all complexions storms as only a Government-regulated Press can storm when it momentarily slips the chain; and the nation, taking its cue from what it hears and reads, demands with entire sincerity that something shall be done; but as soon as passion has exhausted itself the matter ends with resolutions. Bismarck said many pertinent things during the brief period of furious truth-telling which immediately followed his fall, but none was more pertinent than his exposure of the fiction of "Ministerial responsibility." "We have no legal redress against Ministers," he said,

"and all that can be done is for their countrymen to say, 'You have acted incapably, not to say stupidly.'"

The last occasion on which the Emperor compelled the nation to face this question in earnest was six years ago, in connexion with the publication of the *Daily Telegraph* interview. It is true that the Reichstag did not even then go beyond resolutions, but it was significant that parties so various as the Radicals, National Liberals, Clericals, Socialists, and Poles were found voting together in favour of such an amendment of the Constitution as would convert into a reality the abstract principle affirmed by Article XVII. As usual the Social Democrats are more consequent than the other parties of the Left, for they demand that the Reichstag shall have the right not only to appoint but to dismiss Ministers, and that in such matters as its convocation and dissolution, and even the declaration of war, it shall have an equal voice with the Emperor. All that the Government is able to reply is that these demands imply parliamentary government, and that parliamentary government cannot be introduced without departing from existing constitutional principles, naively ignoring the fact that, in Euclidean phrase, that is exactly what has to be done.

Nearly a century ago, while the hope of obtaining a Constitution in Prussia still hung in the balance, the vehement patriot Ernst Moritz Arndt, who had both fought in the War of Emancipation and by his songs and writings had fired the national spirit for the fray, wrote in bitterness of soul: "Should the obscurantists conquer and overcome us, should the spokesmen of stupidity and rottenness succeed in silencing and enslaving German men, then God and fate will have played a fearfully ironical game with us in these late years—a tragi-comedy without parallel in history." Not God and fate, but royal perfidy did play that game, as it has played other like games, with the Prussian nation—a nation so pathetically trustful and credulous, so strangely patient and docile.

Differing in almost all the other characteristics that gave greatness and sublimity to the uprising of the German peoples against Napoleon, the present war resembles it

at least in the national unity and the universal spirit of devotion which have been called forth. Will the natural reward of sacrifice be withheld again, as it was after 1815 ? The call for a drastic reversal of the traditions which have doomed the German nation, capable and creative in so many other directions, to political sterility and impotence is undoubtedly very genuine, and since the war broke out the Social Democratic party has demanded that constitutional reform in the foregoing sense shall be promised without delay as one of the first-fruits of peace. German democrats know in their hearts that the popular cause would be best served by their country's thoroughgoing defeat. Such a lesson, bitter though it would be to national pride, might be expected to knock out of the Emperor's head some of the more dangerous of the nonsensical ideas about divine right which have obsessed him far longer than has been good either for himself or his country, and to compel him to face the fact that the only possible basis of a modern State is the voluntary attachment of its citizens. It is not equally certain that he would be willing to draw the practical conclusions.

Hitherto the Emperor's contributions to the constitutional controversy have mainly consisted of such unhelpful *dicta* as "*Suprema lex regis voluntas*," "Only one is master in the Empire, and I am that one," "My course is the right one, and it shall be followed," and "Those who wish to help me I will welcome, those who oppose me I will smash." Nor has he as King of Prussia shown great concern to redeem his word when any interference with existing political arrangements has been involved. The reform of the three-class franchise was definitely promised six years ago, but in spite of appeals made year after year with ever-increasing urgency, the promise has not yet been fulfilled. His Government's last pronunciamento on the subject was to the effect that it would never allow the Diet to force a franchise on the Crown, and would produce its own franchise just when it thought fit. But "never" is one of the words which have not to be taken too literally in political life, and it is probable that if King William II could satisfy his people by the gift of a

liberal franchise he would give it and would be well pleased with the bargain, as he would have good reason to be. Even so careful a man as Professor Gustav von Schmoller, a Government man through and through, said not long ago: "Anyone in authoritative position who declares that the existing Prussian franchise is altogether good takes upon himself a great responsibility for future catastrophes. No right of the Crown is permanently sure unless the great majority of the citizens are cordially, with heart and soul, on its side."

But such a striking of accounts would no longer satisfy the Prussian Liberals and still less the Social Democrats, and, moreover, it would leave untouched the far larger question of the Reichstag, which is a question for all Germany. Nothing short of a full and unconditional acceptance of parliamentary government as free nations understand it, guaranteed by consequential amendments of the Constitutions, will meet Germany's great need. Without that change there can be no hope of steady political progress, no hope of a permanent reconcilation of North and South, no hope of breaking down the tyranny of militarism, no hope of a new start in Germany's relationships with the rest of the world.

For this question affects Germany's foreign interests as well as its domestic peace. Thoughtful Germans know well that one of the principal reasons why all past attempts to bring about a good understanding between their country and our own have failed has been the fact that the German Government does not represent the German people, and that in the determination of national policy the nation has no effective voice. "Professions that the German nation is peaceably minded make no impression in Great Britain," wrote the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on January 5, 1912, "since the English answer us: 'We are glad to believe it, but the German nation does not make German policy. Its policy is made in a quarter which is absolute, irresponsible, and incalculable, and for that reason we attach merely a platonic and never a practical value to the national professions of peace.' What answer are we to make to that? Unfortunately, it is a fact that on the main question,

whether there is to be war or peace, neither the Reichstag nor the German nation has a word to say."

There is also the colonial question, which will inevitably survive the war settlement, even if it should not form part of that difficult transaction. At the present moment Germany is virtually without colonies, yet however badly it may be beaten, the question of outlets for its surplus population will still have to be faced. It is obvious, however, that an undemocratized Germany would be less able than in the past to count on the support of either this country or France, which would have less interest than ever in seeing the discredited system of absolutism, which has proved a misfortune at home, set up in other parts of the world.

CHAPTER V

KAISERISM AND BYZANTINISM

THERE have been German Kaisers for a thousand years, but never such a Kaiser as the present one, and never before did a Kaiser's personality and its manifestations assume such a distinctive character that they could be described as Kaiserism. The Kaiserism of Germany is more than a personality, it is a political and social institution, and it forms an important part of the machinery by which the nation, pre-eminently the Prussian portion of it, is held in tutelage and subjection.

In order to understand what Kaiserism means it will be necessary to attempt a study of the present Emperor's mind, as revealed by his words, acts, and characteristics. The study needful for the present purpose will, in the nature of the case, be very incomplete, since we are concerned mainly with the Emperor from one side of his character only—the political, his personality as it affects public policy and the formation and regulation of public opinion. Thus our study will inevitably fail to give the Emperor credit for much activity exercised in directions where his influence is either innocuous or altogether good, and this reservation should be remembered in his favour.

The Emperor is in his way an idealist of sorts—"certainly," to repeat the words used by Prince von Bülow upon a famous occasion, "he is not a Philistine"—and some of the impulses which he has given to the higher life of his nation must even to-day be counted to him for righteousness. But his idealism is not Kaiserism, and it is therefore outside our review. Moreover, I for one am still not disposed to change my view that, after

his lights, the Emperor is also a deeply religious man—religious in an ancient rather than a modern, an Old Testament rather than a New Testament, way. As his conception of Prussian kingship will show us, he is convinced that he, in common with all other Hohenzollern kings—some of them men of very inferior moral character—was created only a little lower than the angels. He "believes in soul and is very sure of God," but his God is not the God of humanity, but the special deity of a modern peculiar people, the German nation. "Our old God," as he is pleased to call Him, is a God of wrath and vengeance; Germany's enemies are assumed to be His enemies; and it is necessary to propitiate His favour periodically by shedding the blood of these enemies. A faith of this kind may have its value and its reward, but it has nothing to do with the Emperor as a political figure; it is no part of Kaiserism as here understood, and it cannot be said to belong save indirectly to the things that are wrong with Germany.

I. The Emperor's Ancestor-Worship

The spirit and point of view which the Emperor brings to the discharge of his political duties as he sees them and the claims which he makes upon the credulity and obedience of his subjects are by no means matters of indifference in a country which has not yet been allowed to exercise the most elementary rights of citizenship. The Emperor has set forth the Hohenzollern theory of kingship in scores of speeches, letters, and miscellaneous utterances, spread over twenty-five years, and carefully preserved—sometimes after judicious revision and pruning—by official and private piety. A large amount of good sense is contained in these royal sayings, for the Emperor, besides being a skilled orator and wielding the pen of a ready writer, has thought and spoken upon many of the burning questions of the day, though upon some he has unfortunately spoken much more than he has thought.

It is when he comes to speak of himself and his ancestors, his own works and theirs, that Kaiserism appears. Then

his judgment at once loses every trace of balance, his language falls into exaggerations, extravagances, and superlatives, and he indulges alternately in pæans and fanfares, in theatrical declamations and rhetorical thrills. All the Hohenzollerns, from first to last, are represented as supermen and as such they are placed on pedestals—pedestals of different height, as determined by the estimate of them formed not by impartial history, but by their very partial descendant. Frederick the Great was, on the whole, the most illustrious of the Hohenzollerns, yet we know that he never claimed the reverence which his present representative would bestow upon him. On the contrary, he regarded all such ancestor-worship as childish. Writing to Voltaire, he said :

" Most princes have a peculiar passion for their genealogies ; it is a sort of self-esteem, which extends to the earliest ancestors, not only in the direct line but to collateral relatives. If you venture to tell them that amongst their ancestors there were many very despicable people you are guilty of an offence which they never forgive."

This reservation is quite true of the Hohenzollerns, and were it not that the Emperor seeks to impose an arrogant fiction on the world it might be ungracious to emphasize the fact. In the old days the Hohenzollerns were less blind to each other's failings ; they even had a hearty satisfaction in painting one another " warts and all." Thus the uncle of Frederick William II (Prince Henry of Prussia) said of that king : " My fat nephew is a weakling, who despises decency and morality, and allows himself to be led by the nose by women, favourites, and charlatans in turn. He avoids work and will only increase the crowd of crowned laggards." The two succeeding Prussian kings were not only weak and incompetent as rulers, but cowardly and perfidious.

The Emperor, however, reserves his most lavish praise not for Frederick the Great, of whom in many things he professes to be the pupil, but for the Emperor William I. Extolling his grandfather's merits and his claim to the reverence of posterity, he said, in 1896,

at the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Empire: "The entire celebration centred in the glorification of this personality, who has become for us absolutely holy. It is for us a sacred duty to preserve pure and sublime the hallowed memory of this august lord against everyone, whoever he may be, who assails it." He has even said that if the same "august lord" had lived in the Middle Ages "he would have been canonized, and pilgrimages from all lands would have been made to pray before his ashes."

This and similar adulation the Emperor seeks to justify by the claim that the creation of the Empire was specially his grandfather's work.* Every student of German history knows that this claim is unfounded. The Emperor William I never wanted the Empire nor the Imperial title; in the one he took little interest, and the other had no value or attraction for him; and though he allowed himself to be talked over by his imperious Chancellor, the Kingdom of Prussia was to the last more precious to him than a hundred German Empires.

"I had difficulty," said Prince Bismarck at Jena on July 30, 1892, "in convincing my old master of the charm that lay in the title of Emperor, in the entire representation of the Empire, and the historical relationship which in the German spirit was associated with the Imperial title and the position of Emperor; but I succeeded in the end. Such work behind the scenes and diplomacy at home have almost been more perplexing to me than diplomacy with foreign countries, for there I knew clearly what I had to do."

The old Emperor was a simple, kind-hearted gentleman, with a fine sense of honour and chivalry. He did his duty as king with a kingly loyalty and a noble zeal; never speaking of himself or his achievements, seldom making speeches, living a life of the utmost simplicity,

* A speech of August 1898, in which the Emperor incautiously allowed himself to attribute the establishment of the Empire to the "mutual pressure of the German nation," appeared in the later official form without this generous admission.

and always protesting that he had "learned more from his humiliations than from his successes." As a man he was almost everything that his grandson is not and hardly anything that his grandson is. But as a statesman he was not brilliant and hardly clever, nor did he claim to be. Fate was good to him in sending to him Bismarck when he was ready to abdicate: without that strong man his reign might have been a disastrous failure.

No one would wish to dispute the fact that the Hohenzollerns have been on the whole a very vigorous and capable race, bent on the enlargement and advantage of their kingdom and not always scrupulous about the means of attaining their political ends; but the good have alternated with the indifferent or bad, the strong with the weak, just as in the case of less august families, and certainly there is no justification for the haloes with which the Emperor insists on surrounding them. But Kaiserism needed an artistic background, and a Hohenzollern legend supplied the need as nothing else could have done.

II. The Emperor's Self-Confidence

Owing so much to heredity Kaiserism may thus be said to have been born and not made, and its first characteristic is self-confidence. The Emperor would have us believe that he himself came upon the scene with nothing to learn. "Gentlemen," he said on December 17, 1890, addressing an assembly of the most learned men in Prussia, "my ancestors, feeling the pulse of the time, have always discerned coming events. Then they have placed themselves at the head of the new movements, resolved to direct them and to lead them to new ends. Similarly I think I, too, have recognized whither the new spirit and the century now nearing its end are tending." This confident claim was made by a young man of thirty, who had been called to the throne unexpectedly and without preparation only two years before. Even earlier than this (March 1890) he had made the famous speech in which he declared that "everyone who is against me I will smash."

The Emperor's former tutor, Dr. Hinzepeter, has spoken of him as having "a peculiarly strongly marked individuality, which, susceptible to no change whatever, and resisting even the most powerful external influences, has developed consistently on its own lines." This is a true analysis of his character—the character of a man who learns nothing and forgets nothing. Seldom do we find him betraying the inquiring mind. He travels, yet not to revise his experiences, but to strengthen his prejudices; he attends conferences, but before deliberation opens he takes care to say what the result shall be; he listens to lectures, but in order to air his own knowledge; he calls around him learned men, who have made their special studies a life's work, but it is because he wants to tell them something new.

A recent German writer lamented that it had become "almost impossible to bring to the Emperor's knowledge a full and faithful picture of any national sentiments and tendencies, any endeavours or activities of a social, scientific, or artistic kind whatever," and for this he chiefly blamed the Emperor himself, as being a bad hearer who trusts his intuition in place of knowledge, and is obsessed with the idea of impressing his personality and views on others.

"William II remains the same man he was on the first day of his government," says another German writer, lamenting the Emperor's insensibility to modern ideas. That is the misfortune of Prussia and Germany, for the world has not remained as it was thirty years ago, but has made a good deal more than thirty years' advance, measuring its progress by the pace which satisfied the older generation now living.

Napoleon's motto was "*Savoir se borner*," and Goethe maintained that a ruler's proper business was to rule, and that he would do well to leave other matters alone. "The art of government," he said, "is a great *métier* requiring the whole man, and it is therefore not well for a ruler to have too strong tendencies for other affairs." He particularly warned rulers not to dabble in the arts.

But the Emperor, besides knowing all about statecraft,

political and civil administration, the army and navy, commerce and shipbuilding, claims to speak with equal authority on painting and sculpture, literature and theology, architecture and archæology, music and the drama. He is at once Imperial Chancellor and Foreign Secretary, War Lord and Admiral of the Fleet, constitutional head of the Protestant Church and secular patron of the Roman Catholic episcopacy; he is censor of art, music, letters, and morals; he watches over trade, industry, and agriculture with equal solicitude; he attends the launching of ships and the opening of churches; when barracks are completed or dynastic monuments unveiled, regattas sailed or horse-races run, he is there. And yet who can doubt that one-half of the Emperor's attenuated knowledge, were it deepened and digested, and one-quarter of his ceaseless activity would be worth to himself and his people far more than the whole?

Kaiserism means first, therefore, a dangerous assumption of universal knowledge by one who claims to be regarded as a universal genius. Not only does the Emperor know everything, however, but he knows it better than anybody else. Most rulers have been content to be judged by their acts and to allow posterity to pass its verdict in its own time. The Emperor passes judgment upon himself at once, so that he may enjoy the foretaste of immortality in his lifetime.

He has great ideas as to the strength of his will. "That which was lacking to the old Hansa—a strong, united Empire, obedient to one will—we now have, thanks to the grace of Heaven and the deeds of my grandfather." And in order that there may be no mistake as to whose will this is, he says: "Only one is master in the Empire and I am that one—I tolerate no other." When cruising in the North Sea he telegraphed to Bielefeld his intention to present to that town, as a grateful memento of its reception of him, a replica of a statue of the Great Elector just erected in Berlin. That was not enough, however, for he added that the statue was to be "a permanent sign that as in this

ancestor, so in me there is an inflexible will to go forward in the way once deemed right, in spite of all resistance." In the same spirit he said at Danzig on one occasion: "When I undertake anything I carry it out," a statement which has again and again been contradicted by facts.

Judged by his own estimate, the Emperor might be the only man in Germany who did a good day's work in a day. Returning from Vienna and Rome after one of his early political travels, he told the Berlin municipal executive that he had "staked his health and all his powers in the task of creating new ties of peace and assuring the prosperity of the Fatherland." He spoke at another time of his "heavy duties and never-ending labours and exertions," and by a curious irony of events this was at a time of political anxiety when his people were praying night and day that he would remain quiet. It was in the speech in which he administered to his countrymen a warning against self-glorification, as a common and dangerous human failing, that he declared that those who were willing to help him in his work of government he would welcome and those who opposed him he would "smash," since he alone knew what was good for the nation.

These are a few of the maxims of royal policy coined for the better cultivation of attachment between Sovereign and subjects:

"One shall be the master, and that is I."

"My cause is the right one, and it shall be followed." (The Krüger telegram followed just after.)

"For me every Social Democrat is an enemy of the Empire and the Fatherland."

"*Suprema lex regis voluntas.*" (Written in the Golden Book of Munich, in democratic Bavaria.)

"In the presence of the Socialist agitation it may happen—though may God avert it!—that I shall order you to shoot down your relatives, brothers, yes, even parents; but even then you must obey my commands without murmuring." (This was at the swearing-in of recruits at Potsdam.)

"I can be very unpleasant when I like and shall be." (A threat to the Poles of East Prussia).

When he receives a deputation of the Berlin police he tells it: "You are the arm that I need to compel obedience when necessary," and when he opens a new barracks in his capital he bids the assembled officers know that the troops to be housed there must "if necessary repress the disobedient Berliners." In spite of these and similar provocative utterances the Emperor could rebuke the Mayor and Corporation of the same city because the local Press—over which they had no control—had dared to criticize him, and could complain to the President of the Prussian Lower House that "criticism of the Crown takes the rudest and most offensive forms, with the consequence that the youth of the nation is becoming confused and demoralized."

Frederick the Great declared it to be his will that his country should be so ruled that people would come to it gladly and leave it unwillingly. The Emperor rules as he will, and advises those who are dissatisfied to take themselves off for the country's good. That was the gist of the memorable speech in which he declared war on the pessimists: "The world belongs to the living and the living are right. I will tolerate no pessimists, so let the man who is not willing to work go as soon as he likes and seek a better country elsewhere."

This outburst was too much even for the patriotic Professor Hans Delbrück, who wrote in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*:

"It must not be thought that the passionate feeling which the speech has provoked will prove transient Anyone who reports differently to his Majesty upon the effect of this speech will be branded by public opinion as a liar and a traitor to his royal master."

The Ministerial journal, the *Cologne Gazette*, similarly wrote:

"The advisers of the Crown would most of all do well to inquire into the causes of pessimism and uneasiness and inform the Emperor of them without concealment. Amongst the pessimists the conviction is entertained

that the sore which is eating out the nation's marrow is not confined to the nation, but that the Government and the system under which we are governed are also largely to blame, and that the necessary enlightenment on the subject should not be withheld from the Emperor."

III. The Divine Right of Kings

"It is impossible to understand the personality of William II," says a German writer, "unless one takes into account his conviction that he rules by God's grace." * All exaggerations of his own personality and capacity on the human side are as nothing compared with his literal assumption of divine authority and inspiration. The claim is made in the most various ways:

"The Hohenzollern house is imbued with a feeling of duty resting on the consciousness that it has been set up by God and has to render only to Him and its own conscience an account of what it does for the good of its land."

"Just as the first King of Prussia said, '*Ex me mea nata corona*' ['I have created my own crown'], and his great son established his authority as a *rocher de bronze*, so, like my Imperial grandfather, I represent monarchy by the grace of God."

"He [Emperor William I] has again exalted . . . the monarchy by God's grace, fraught with a terrible responsibility to the Creator alone, of which no man, no Minister, no Parliament, and no people can relieve the Princes."

"The King is King by God's grace, therefore he is responsible only to the Lord."

Describing how the divine afflatus descended upon the first Emperor, he said at Frankfort (May 10, 1896): "I call to mind the moment when my grandfather, as King by the grace of God, took the crown in one hand and the Imperial sword in the other and gave honour to God alone and from Him took the crown. In that

* "Unser Kaiser und sein Volk: deutsche Sorgen." Von einem Schwarzseher.

way he became a chosen instrument,* and not only so, but became for all his successors a symbol that they, too, can achieve nothing save through and with their God, who has conferred their office upon them." He spoke in the same strain on September 9, 1901, at Königsberg, "where once the Emperor William the Great stood and placed the crown upon his head in sign that it was given to him by God alone and was so regarded by him." A little reflection is sufficient to show that divine right on this theory is neither very convincing nor very imposing, for the very absence of religious ceremony appears to have made the act more divine.

But the Emperor himself is equally a divine instrument:

"Regarding myself as an instrument of the Lord, I go my way, whose goal is the welfare and peaceable development of our Fatherland, and in so doing I am indifferent to the views and opinions of the day."

Such pretensions as these inevitably lead to contradictions and absurdities. If the Hohenzollerns rule by divine right, so must the other German Princes, yet for nearly half a century, from 1866 to 1913, the Prussian Kings refused to allow the Duke of Brunswick, though a lawful Sovereign, to take his throne, and when the heir came at last to his own it was by the grace of the Emperor himself, whose daughter he was about to marry. Inconsistencies of this kind do not trouble the Emperor. The very creation of the Prussian monarchy, with all its record of violence, aggression, and craft—a record in which it is by no means unique—was God's doing. "The fact that my wise ancestor, Johann Sigismund, set his hand on the Berg and Cleve country," he said on one occasion, "was in a sense a work of Providence." Yet the truth is that this part of Prussia was won by a long course of sordid quarrelling, in which bloodshed took a conspicuous part.

It is often claimed in extenuation of the Emperor's idiosyncrasies that he is a romanticist, but no German

* Luther similarly spoke of himself as a "chosen instrument of God" ("ein auserwähltes Werkzeug Gottes").

romanticism ever excused or covered such extravagances as he perpetrates in the name of kingship and statecraft. This vein in his character does, however, help to explain his love of show, his extravagant tastes, and his fondness for posing. Although he has called himself "a child of the present," he loves to live in the past, and revels in its conventions and symbolism. If he has a special regret it must be that he cannot with any show of reality repeat the mockeries of the Grand Monarque. But, at least, he can imitate Frederick the Great to his heart's content, for he is in the family. He addresses Moltke in the true Frederician style as "your well-affectioned (wohlaffektionierter) William II." As a compliment to the painter Menzel he reconstructs the musical evening at Sans-souci, and himself enters the room decked as the Great Frederick, with tight breeches and powdered wig, followed by a retinue dressed up in the strict costume of the time.

It was said by a witty Frenchman that the French were the greatest actors when off the stage. For the Emperor all the world is a stage, and he is for ever playing a dramatic part, yet his acting is in all probability quite unconscious. When celebrating (January 18, 1896) the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Empire with an assembly gathered from all parts of Germany in the White Hall of the Royal Palace in Berlin, he carefully dragged in the inevitable histrionic touch. "At the end of his speech from the throne," runs the record, "the Emperor seized the flag of the First Regiment of Guards, lowered it before the assembly, and said, with clear voice: 'In view of this honourable symbol, which attests a glorious history of nearly two hundred years, I renew the vow to defend the nation's and the Empire's honour, both at home and abroad, one Empire, one People, one God.'" The incident was very impressive, but the sequel less so. Recalling this vow in the speech from the throne with which he opened the Reichstag in the following year, the Emperor said: "You then heard my oath with moved hearts and moist eyes, and thus became my co-jurors." So that the

Emperor, even in a moment so solemn and elevating, had not been indifferent to the visible effect of his oratory.

It would be ungenerous to doubt the sincerity of the Emperor's emotions, and unjustifiable to question his profound conviction of the sacredness of his royal calling and responsibilities. But toleration and credulity have their limits. A king who can calmly stand by and patiently listen while his own brother (Prince Henry of Prussia) assures him that he is going abroad "not for fame or laurels, but to preach the gospel of your Majesty's sacred person" (December 15, 1897), without unceremoniously boxing the flatterer's ears lacks all sense of proportion and propriety, and, worst of all, of humour.

"The gospel of the Emperor's sacred person!" This is Kaiserism elevated to a cult. We have seen what it means from the dogmatic side—protestations of more than human knowledge, claims to practical infallibility, assumptions of divine authority, fortified by obsolete shibboleths and the perversion of history. One might well ask if language such as falls from the Emperor's lips day by day does not belong to wonderland or the madhouse, and be aghast—as many thoughtful Germans are—at the prospect of such a legacy of folly and frivolity being left to mystify and embarrass his successor. Yet such is the political philosophy doled out in the twentieth century in profusion for the edification of a great nation, which professes to be the special pioneer of culture, and repeated with every variant that flattery and interest can suggest by the large crowd of reactionaries and hangers-on who look up to the Emperor as the defender of their privileged position, knowing that with him they stand and without him they would fall. Prussian monarchism has arrived at that critical stage which Treitschke contemplated when he spoke of the danger of royal "self-deification" and of its "demoralizing effects."

At the one extreme we have a serious constitutional historian like Paul de Lagarde uttering his longing for a ruler "who, not only in virtue of his personality but in law, shall be Kaiser, who shall have nothing alongside him, under him only subjects, and over him God and the

last judgment." At the other extreme there are the faithful Junkers who, when the Emperor tells them to follow him, since he is "leading them to glorious days," follow with unquestioning loyalty, without asking where they are to be led, and who would still more readily overturn the Constitution and shut up the Houses of Parliament at his bidding, and place themselves under his feet as in the old days of despotism.

But the influence of Kaiserism does not stop here, for between these extremes there is a large body of more or less invertebrate public opinion, particularly in Prussia, which, in a stolid and unreasoning way, accepts this travesty of kingship, partly owing to credulity and partly to the intellectual indolence and moral cowardice which indispose weak people to think and act for themselves and follow a clear, independent, and manly course of their own. The late Dr. L. Bamberger, a leader of the Radical party, spoke truly of "the cult of the House of Hohenzollern, whereby some historians and, following their example, many millions of Germans have erected their veneration for the Hohenzollern dynasty into an ecstatic and mystic religion—a species of fanaticism without parallel in history. Never of the Antonines, nor of the Medici, nor of the Bourbons, nor of the Hapsburgs was it maintained in such dithyrambic strains that every ruler of their house must, by the mere fact of his existence, be a pattern of superhuman perfection lawfully placed on the throne."

This cult of Kaiserism is assiduously propagated by all the devices known to the political wirepuller. One of these is the adulteration of history as taught in the schools. Here the Emperor himself pointed the way when early in his reign he insisted that in Prussia history must be given a national and dynastic atmosphere. "German history," he said, in a decree of February 13, 1890, "and especially that of modern and recent times, must be emphasized, and ancient and mediæval history must chiefly be taught for the purpose of making the scholars susceptible to the heroic and to historical greatness by the use of examples out of those times."

Such a statement looked innocent enough, but it implied more than appeared on the surface. The heroic in Prussian history meant the prowess of the Hohenzollerns and the glorification of the Prussian monarchy by the grace of God. So the Prussian Minister of Education interpreted the Emperor's mind, and accordingly he promptly issued the order: "That which was said at the time of Frederick the Great, 'the other nations envy Prussia its king,' is still true to-day. A wealth of vivid reflections and profoundly suggestive incidents will be furnished by a recital of the uninterrupted work for their country and people in which the Hohenzollerns have been engaged for nearly half a millennium. Hence all Prussian kings should occupy a prominent place in the teaching of Prussian youth."

It is a common complaint that in the schools a travesty of history is forced upon the receptive intelligences of children, who must imbibe it whether they will or not, and who therefore grow up with distorted conceptions and perspectives, false admirations and heroisms, and a very exaggerated idea of the importance of their country and its relationship to the rest of the world. All this, however, is in sympathy with the orthodox view that the supposed interests of the State should override all other considerations. In the Prussian Diet the leader of the Conservative party, Baron von Zedlitz, said not long ago:

"It is the characteristic of the Prussian school that it is not intended exclusively or even primarily to provide children with the knowledge necessary for their after life, but rather to train them to be good men, good Christians, and good patriots."

Kaiserism is also industriously popularized by the drama. "The theatre is also one of my weapons," said the Emperor on one occasion, and speaking in 1898 he recalled the fact that "when I came to the throne ten years ago I had firmly determined that the royal theatre should be an instrument of the monarch, like the school and the university." Dramatists like Wildenbruch and Lauff have bravely done their share in glorifying the

Hohenzollern cult on the stage, just as painters like Anton von Werner, Koberstein, and Röchling have on canvas. Genius does not thrive in restraint, however, and it is not surprising to find a recent German critic writing: "None of the noblest achievements of modern life in philosophy, art, poetry, literature, or music owe anything to the Emperor."*

IV. The Emperor and his Ministers

No man, however gifted, whose sense of importance had been so magnified, both by honest and dishonest admirers, as has been the case with the Emperor could hope to preserve a healthy balance of mind. The spirit of infallibility breeds intolerance, and here the Emperor's acts are true to his faith. No modern Sovereign is so impatient of criticism and so resentful of resistance. Such a ruler almost necessarily regards advice as an impertinence and opposition as a misdemeanour. When an absolute ruler is convinced that "my course is the right one," and is determined that it shall be followed, the business of Ministers of State is simply to carry out the perfect will, and for such work men of third-rate capacity are more fitted than men of talent, while in both strength and independence are positive disadvantages.

The history of the Imperial Chancellorship since the Emperor came to the throne is far more creditable to the Ministers than to their master. "A good Minister," Bismarck once said, "should not trouble about his Sovereign's favour, but speak his mind freely." Bismarck sacrificed himself to his own philosophy. Had he not tried to follow with his "young master" the same policy which he successfully carried out with the old, to the latter's complete satisfaction, he might have remained in office to the end of his days. He ventured to press his independence too far, however, and he had to go. In later life he reflected not without bitterness, "Former rulers looked to their advisers for capacity more than

* *Die Neue Rundschau*, June 1913.

obedience. If obedience alone is to be the criterion, then demands will be made on the general genius of the monarch which even Frederick the Great would not have satisfied, though politics, both in war and peace, were less difficult in his time than in our own."

The later Chancellors all took office with a full consciousness that the only safe policy was that of compliance, and that in proportion as they endeavoured to follow the path commended by their own judgment they risked the disfavour either of the Emperor or his Conservative bodyguard or both. Bismarck's successor was General Caprivi, a man of transparent honesty and distinguished industry, if not of great intellectual parts. He was a soldier by profession, yet in politics he proved but a poor strategist, for while in military strategy there is little place for bluffing, he found that in politics there is room for little else, and in the game of make-believe straightforward men do not shine. He had to combat a Junker camarilla, and when the Emperor failed to give him the necessary protection he took his leave.

Prince Hohenlohe took the thankless office in old age, for he was seventy-five when the call came in October 1894. He consulted Bismarck on the question, and he records how the dethroned autocrat prepared him for discomfort owing to the Emperor's "sudden decisions." Before a year had passed, as he tells in his Memoirs, he found that "a number of politicians and highly placed busybodies are doing their best to discredit me with his Majesty," and a year later he had reason to believe that his decline was imminent. "My relations with his Majesty are peculiar," he wrote. "Sometimes, owing to his little acts of thoughtlessness and want of consideration, I come to the conclusion that he purposely avoids me and that it cannot go on. Then I see him again and I think I was mistaken." So it continued until 1900, when he resigned after judging from various signs that the step would not be unacceptable. He has put it on record that the Emperor had actually been waiting for his resignation and had already chosen his successor.

This was Prince von Bülow, a diplomat and polished man of the world, gifted with a happy-go-lucky disposition, which never deserted him even in the most difficult situations. A political wit, parodying one of Bismarck's memorable *dicta*, once said that "Bülow feared the Junkers and nothing else in the world." That he was able to keep them at bay so long was due to the fact that he was the only Chancellor who really succeeded in winning the Emperor's complete approval. The secret of his success was his *savoir vivre*, for though perfectly aware of his master's weaknesses he was astute enough to defer to them, so far as it could be done with safety. As a rule he let the Emperor have all the tether he wished, only now and then jerking the cord, as a rule after he had gone too far instead of before. Whether the answer said to have been made by Bülow when a Ministerial politician deplored the Emperor's indiscretions, "You do not know how much I prevent," be true or not, Bülow failed to prevent the two indiscretions of the Tweedmouth letter and the *Daily Telegraph* interview, indiscretions which caused a greater temporary alienation between Crown and people than had occurred in Germany for half a century.

The record of the present Chancellor is still incomplete, and it remains to be seen whether he will be able to direct the Emperor's steps into a new constitutional course when the war is over. His success would herald a happier future for the German nation; his failure would as certainly make the nation's outlook dark and hopeless indeed.

Of the minor Ministers who have served the Empire and Prussia during the Emperor's reign, it may be said with truth that, except in spheres quite unconnected with politics, hardly one has left a permanent name in virtue either of strength or originality. "Our Ministers," says a German writer, "are more or less capable officials who, outside the narrowest circles of the bureaucracy, are entirely unknown. They have honestly worked themselves up, and have acquired a more or less thorough knowledge of their business. But the idea of repre-

senting to the Emperor independent opinions, plans, or criticism, or of opposing him from a sense of duty, would savour to them of sacrilege." *

V. The Spread of Byzantinism

The influence of Kaiserism in political and social life has been unmistakably demoralizing, for it has given rise to a pernicious system of sycophancy, called in Germany by the unattractive name Byzantinism, which within the limits of its influence has undermined intellectual freedom, sapped moral vigour, corrupted public opinion, and killed that "manly pride before royal thrones" which Schiller extolled. When Prince Henry of Prussia addresses his brother as "most august Emperor, most high and mighty King and lord, illustrious brother," and thanks him out of his "faithful, fraternal, and most obedient heart," he presumably complies with the modern Hohenzollern domestic etiquette, with which the world has nothing to do. The President of the Reichstag, however, is the representative of the nation, and public protests were many and vigorous when, a few years ago, the recurrence of the Emperor's birthday drew from him the glowing dithyramb:

"The Hohenzollerns were ever men who understood their time. They were iron-armoured knights in the Middle Ages and great generals in modern times, and they were always in advance of all other contemporary princes in rightly understanding their age. This applies equally to our Emperor: he has understood his age and has said: 'I live in a time of publicity and talk, and I will not be a so-called constitutional monarch who reigns and does not rule.' Therefore he has always come forward and has taken a prominent position in State affairs."

The Emperor can bear this sort of thing, however, and his flatterers are willing to give him as much as he likes. A courtier of the baser sort is even reported to have said to him on one occasion: "Your Majesty

* "Unser Kaiser und sein Volk."

becomes every day more like Frederick the Great—but without his defects."

The author of "William II—Romanticist or Socialist?" writes: "Never does the world hear of any free, manly utterance spoken at Court before the Emperor. Servility, impudently parading itself, increases more and more—a servility which treads all manliness underfoot and is grateful for every glance thrown to it from the ruling circles."* "Everybody sighs for gracious acknowledgment or generous kicks," said Bismarck once. "There are even Princes of ancient lineage who do not belong to the vertebrate order." Adulation indulged as a part of daily devotions in the higher circles is feebly aped in the lower, until a too vivacious criticism of the Emperor's words or acts uttered in a public place in the hearing of a zealous loyalist may lead to denunciation to the police and possibly prosecution. The people who descend to the disreputable level of the secret informer probably think less of doing the Emperor a service than of benefiting themselves, by satisfying their superiors that they are loyal citizens and exemplary patriots.

Germany boasts of being "the land of Fichte." Yet at the centenary of Fichte's death in 1913 the University of Berlin, whose first rector he was, had not the courage to honour this great man with the customary "Feier." The excuse for this act of impiety was worse than the act itself, for the only explanation offered by the university authorities was "the approaching birthday festivities for the Emperor." All the world knew that if Fichte, the apostle of liberty and the advocate of popular government, whom all Prussia idolized a century ago, had been publicly honoured, the Emperor would have declined the same compliment. As it was, a few professors were deputed to go to the cemetery in which the

* The writer of the work in which these words occur says in a postscript that he had been "warned against the consequences" of publication. As the book is perfectly innocent, the "consequences" in this case could only have been the social disparagement and ostracism which, in one form or another, menace all writers who dare to speak their minds.

great patriot is buried and there quietly lay a petty wreath upon his grave.

Mahomet propagated his religion by the sword. Kaiserism is propagated by weapons less deadly, but not less poignant and effective. Those who accept the faith are rewarded and those who reject it are punished. Titles and decorations are dear to German ambition, and they are bestowed in countless number, often, of course, in just recognition of honourable service, but often as the reward of a scheming, official loyalty and an insincere lip fidelity. While this eagerness for recognition is common in the bureaucracy it is even more common in certain ranks of private life. A recent German writer says: "We all know the monument committees whose members yearn for Red Eagle and smaller buttonhole decorations, for 'professor' and 'councillor of commerce' titles, and for opportunities of parading their loyal disposition in the limelight. We all know the philanthropists who feverishly try to attract attention above, and we also know the fruits of their envious strivings."* The same unworthy ambitions are indulged and are similarly gratified in other countries, but nowhere is the ideal value of outward marks of royal favour so small as in Germany, because nowhere else is the institution of public rewards attended by so much abuse.

Where this spirit of servility prevails patriotism and loyalty cease to have worth and dignity; they are degraded to the level of merchandise, as emotions with a market or at least a social value. Not long ago a man of the middle class, prosecuted in a Berlin court for a criminal offence, concluded his defence by informing the judge that "should he be convicted his attitude towards monarchical institutions, hitherto friendly, would undergo a complete change." As he was convicted, it is to be presumed that he duly became one of the crowd of unprincipled camp-followers that hangs on to the Socialist army.

It is fair to say that the military caste, however open to criticism otherwise, is guiltless of the reproach of

* *Die Neue Rundschau*, 1913.

Byzantinism. There is something in the soldier's training and code of life that makes for honesty and straightforwardness, sometimes even to the point of brusqueness. He may be broken, but he will not cringe.

I myself have heard officers in active service criticize the Emperor and Kaiserism with a freeness and vivacity which could hardly be excelled, and a recent German writer says: "Every year a thousand more years of imprisonment would be awarded in the German Empire if all the things said at the beer-tables of retired officers in the course of one twelvemonth were reported to the Public Prosecutor."

But the corollary of reward is punishment, and the punishment for hesitancy or unwillingness to accept the cult of Kaiserism and to perform all needful rites is disregard, or depreciation, or even social extinction. The severest penalties are awarded in official life. Is it a wonder that free and honest public opinion becomes increasingly rarer in Prussia? The mind and conscience of the nation have been so corrupted by the system of rewards and punishments and so terrorized by an unofficial censorship of public life that only men of the greatest independence dare to utter their convictions openly.

German testimony might be freely cited in proof that this judgment is neither too severe nor too sweeping. Upon such a subject it is specially instructive to know what educated Germans themselves think, and the following extracts are merely given as illustrations. The author of "William II—Romanticist or Socialist?" writes:

"In the expression of German public opinion every honest German must observe an enormous reserve. The German conscience is becoming emasculated and un-Germanized. To be German should be to be straightforward, true, and honest, but that cannot be said of present-day public opinion, for it is, on the contrary, deceitful, dishonourable, and cowardly. This retrogression in public opinion is a sign of weakness and of the cowardice of the German people"*

* "Wilhelm II, Romantiker oder Sozialist?"

In his book "The Emperor and the Future of the German Nation" Herr G. Fuchs, though an enthusiastic admirer of the Emperor, is compelled to admit:

"The view is prevalent to-day that only that man can hope to come to the front who divests himself of all higher impulses, all deep feelings, all serious thoughts. The cunning of the Jewish cattle-dealer, combined with the amiable impertinence of the *commis-voyageur*, the peaceable self-effacement of the shopkeeper, and the brag of the mountebank are the characteristics of the conquering type of to-day and the future."

A German review, lamenting not long ago the fact that so many Germans leave their native country in order to seek and find fortune in lands offering freer play to independence and individuality, said:

"It is no accident. It is just the ablest men who discover that the development of their faculties is attended by so many obstacles in Germany that common prudence induces them to seek a more promising sphere in other countries. Narrow-mindedness in political, religious, and social matters has traditionally driven from Germany the best elements of the nation. It is only necessary to think of the year 1848, which cost us a loss in strength of character, intelligence, and energy which will never be made good, just as France has never recovered from the exile of the Huguenots. While Germany's colonial policy suffers from every imaginable evil, because the right men are lacking, our able pioneers go to England, the United States, and other countries, and there in an atmosphere of liberty achieve vast economic successes to the advantage of other nations. It is a misfortune for Germany that our most dangerous competitors in the international market—the United States and England—enjoy incalculable advantages from the help of Germans whom our bureaucracy, our caste spirit, and our religious prejudice drive from the land. Karl Schurz may, amongst others, be cited in proof of this contention. What might not this man have achieved in Germany!" *

* *Das freie Wort,*

Such is Kaiserism, and such are some of the more conspicuous effects as Germans themselves see them. It is a system which enslaves both mind and conscience, perverts judgment, and makes a healthy and honest public opinion impossible. It is based upon the negation of all thought and conviction. It reduces free men to the level of serfs and it undermines the very foundations of constitutional government. A nation which assents to or tolerates such a system cannot claim to be a nation of free citizens or even of good subjects. This is one of the things that are to-day most wrong with Germany.

CHAPTER VI

PRUSSIAN MILITARISM

In speaking of militarism as another of the things that are wrong with Germany, it is necessary to discriminate, for though the whole nation suffers from the effects, it does not equally share the spirit of militarism. No one would dream of speaking of Bavarian, or Saxon, or Würtemberg militarism. The words would not fit. The growth is a Prussian growth, and it is the excrescence of a system of government and an order of political ideas which are specially characteristic of Prussia. Narrow the issue still further, and for practical purposes we may trace the home of militarism to Prussia east of the Elbe, the stronghold of Junkerism and hence of obscurantism in every single form in which it retards and deteriorates the national life of the northern monarchy. Not inappropriately does the Emperor reserve all his most warlike orations for this portion of his own Fatherland —the first nucleus of his kingdom, but also the nursery of that pernicious system of political ascendancy which, as we have seen, makes Imperial (and not only Prussian) constitutionalism a mockery, and leaves the Prussian nation still, after over sixty years of parliamentary life, absolutely devoid of any genuine parliamentary government.

The spirit which underlies Prussian militarism, therefore, is one with the spirit that has made the Polish provinces of Prussia a bed of torment for an ancient, proud, and long-suffering race ; that has for over forty years wantonly kept open the sores of Schleswig-Holstein and Alsace-Lorraine ; that has been the cause of Germany's long record of colonial failures ; that stifles free

thought, cripples the freedom of the universities, and regards the schools, art, letters, the drama, even religion itself, as mere feeders and dependents of the dominant political system; and that has now committed Germany to a war against civilization, in the pursuit of which its war-lord scours the wide world vainly for a single friend.

I. The Inwardness of Militarism

But militarism must not be confused with universal service or the "nation in arms." There is no militarism in Switzerland, though the manhood of that country is no less liable than that of Germany to undergo military training and, when required, to take up arms in defence of its country, and though the proportion of able-bodied Swiss who do in fact qualify themselves for fighting is larger than in Germany. Even the German Social Democrats, the uncompromising enemies of militarism and military government, advocate universal military service in the form of a national militia. The conception of militarism makes the army a direct instrument of State policy and war a legitimate political purpose, instead of a terrible abnormality. In accordance with that idea the whole life of the nation is organized on a military plan. The home, the school, professional life, industrial and commercial relationships, the working of the State and public services—all are regulated from the standpoint of warlike possibilities, and subordinated to the one supreme consideration, how best to convert the nation into an efficient fighting machine. In order that this view of State purpose may be realized, the civilian's placid life is represented as something inferior to the career of the soldier, and a powerful administrative caste is set up, as a class apart from the rest of the nation, whose business it is to personify the military ideal and keep before the nation the view that war is a worthier pursuit than peace.

Such is militarism as it has been forced upon Germany by Prussia, a State established by force and maintained by force down to the present time. Frederick the Great

created the military State, and he could boast that "the world does not rest more securely on the shoulders of Atlas than the Prussian State on the shoulders of the army," but even he did not exalt militarism more systematically into an instrument of the royal will than his descendant in the present day. Since the age of Frederick there has been one time only when a different course of development might have seemed possible for Prussia. It was when at the beginning of last century its military organization collapsed before Napoleon's genius, and Prussia was only saved by the spontaneous rising of the nation, which, arming itself as one man, achieved the victories which had been denied to professional soldiers. The militarism of those days contained no menace. As a German writer says: "It was rather the active side of humanism; it was an utterly different thing from the Frederician drill; it rested on a broad popular basis, and counted on the good-will of the citizens, who were to be trained to love the Fatherland as the custodian of liberty and order." * At that time it was even possible for Blücher's general Gneisenau to lay before Frederick William III a serious scheme for reorganizing the army on a militia basis. "It is not always the standing armies," he wrote in 1811, "which have saved thrones and States; often it was the love of a people enthusiastic for its ruler. King Alfred of England wore only a peasant's garb, yet he rescued throne and people from the power of the ever-terrible Danes." The King's marginal comment upon Gneisenau's scheme was "Good as poetry."

In the middle of the century militarism in the earlier or the present sense seemed to maintain so feeble a hold upon Prussia that when the Revolution of 1848 broke out the King could not count on his army for support. Militarism and the military spirit were fastened on modern Prussia from the moment that Bismarck's policy of "blood and iron"—made possible by a reorganization of the army carried out by the aid of taxes levied unconstitutionally—seemed to be justified by three successful wars. It was apprehension as to the ultimate

* Dr. S. Saenger in *Die Neue Rundschau*, 1913.

outcome of that policy that led Professor Mommsen, one of the stoutest champions of popular government, to bid the nation take heed " lest in this State, which has been at once a power in arms and a power in intelligence, the intelligence should vanish and nothing but the pure military State remain."

" Without dogma no deans," said a witty English statesman. " Without absolute government no militarism," is the lesson of Prussian history down to the present day, when Prussia under William II offers the spectacle of a despotism almost comparable with that of Louis XIV, and resting just as completely on the foundation of military power. Militarism is bred of autocracy as a Caliban of a Sycorax. Given a virtually autocratic ruler, who has inherited the doctrine that nations exist for kings and armies are the only secure foundation of States, who possesses traditionally and in constitutional law unrestricted control over the forces of national defence, and who has been trained in a school whose leading dictum is that political questions are questions of power, and Prussian militarism becomes not only possible but inevitable, and in a way comprehensible. Whatever German Liberals may say to-day, it is only yesterday that they were deploring the obsession of militarism as a direct fruit of absolutism. " The unrestricted power over the army," said one of their leaders, Deputy Schrader, on March 18, 1909, " simply implies that a relic of the absolute State still remains, and naturally its influence is extended beyond the army."

It is the Emperor's boast that the army is his principal concern. His tutor, Dr. Hinzepeter, has told how, while he was still a young man, and was supposed to be learning the art of government, the interests of civil life one by one gave way before a passionate devotion to military concerns. When he came to the throne, " the most important heritage " left to him, a heritage into which he " entered with pride and pleasure," was not the nation's attachment, but the army, and it was " to my army," therefore, that he addressed his first proclamation. His proclamation to " the Prussian nation " only came three

days later. If the Emperor's speeches are read it will be found that while many of them contain pious protestations of a love of peace the characteristic note is struck by his exaltation of the army, the glory of war, and his own special place as the national war-lord. For example :

" I and the army are born for each other, and we will remain inseparable."

" The soldier and the army, and not parliamentary majorities and resolutions, have welded together the German Empire. My confidence is based on the army. Whatever betide, we will hold high our flags and traditions, remembering the words and deeds of Albrecht Achilles, ' I know no worthier place in which to die than in the midst of the enemy.' "

" The foundations of the State are the army and the navy."

" Now, as ever, the one pillar on which the Empire rests is the army."

" The chief pillars of the army are courage, honour, and unconditional blind obedience."

" My brave army is and will remain the rock on which Germany's power and greatness rest."

A German panegyrist of the Emperor says that he can claim to be " a true Hohenzollern " in that he is " first a soldier, then a citizen, first the leader of the Prussian army, and then King of the Prussian people." And if that were not sufficient, he is able to force militarism on the German nation in virtue of the provisions of the Imperial Constitution, which confer upon the King of Prussia, as hereditary Emperor, virtually autocratic powers in relation to national defence. The Southern States knew well the danger which they were running in coming into an Empire upon which Prussia was determined to impose its spirit and will. Writing in 1870, Sir Robert Morier said that the anti-Prussian stream was then running in South Germany more strongly than he had known it since 1866, and that " it is exactly on this very question of militarism that it runs so high." The Southern States had little choice, however, for they came in after Prussia had made sure of the States north of the

Main, which were already bound to it by the Constitution of the North German Confederation, and in all essential matters that Constitution became the basis of the Empire established in 1871.

The Emperor exercises supreme command over both the army and the navy, with the single exception that the King of Bavaria retains the command over the army in that kingdom during time of peace, though the Emperor is entitled to inspect it and all administrative arrangements relating to it, and to require such amendments as he may think necessary. He also declares war and concludes peace, though in the case of a war of offence he must obtain the sanction of the Federal Council; in his own right, however, he can begin defensive war, place any part of the federal territory in a state of war, and mobilize the army except in Bavaria, where he proposes this measure and the King of Bavaria must carry it out. And while in the case of an offensive war the Constitution requires that the Emperor shall act in concert with the Federal Council, it must be remembered that this body represents only the federal Princes, and that the Emperor's delegate is the president. Moreover, as recent events have shown, the line dividing defensive and aggressive wars is entirely imaginary. For a war to be regarded as defensive it is only necessary that the Emperor, with or without the concurrence of his advisers, shall declare it to be such. For all practical purposes, therefore, his power over the army is unrestricted. His power over the navy is subject to no restrictions whatever.

Nor has the Emperor left his fellow Princes and the nation in any doubt as to his claims:

"It is my business alone to decide if there shall be war."

"The more I get behind party cries and party considerations, the more firmly and surely do I count on my army and the more definitely do I hope that my army, whether abroad or at home, will follow my wishes and signs."

"The soldier has not to have a will of his own; you must all, indeed, have one will, but that is my will; there is only one law, and that is my law."

From first to last, therefore, the Parliament of the nation is excluded from any part in the administration of the army; it may criticize and complain, and does both freely, but its only positive power is confined to voting or withholding the grants called for. The Government is equally powerless except as agent of the Emperor.

A German writer, deploring the eclipse of civil life by militarism, says that "William II has been seen in six different uniforms in the same day, but never once in civilian dress." The fact, if such it be, would be undeserving of mention were it not that it illustrates the marked disparagement of civil life which is so characteristic of the military caste in Germany. Anyone attending for the first time a sitting of the Imperial Diet, and seeing the gorgeous uniforms worn by Ministers and members of the Federal Council, might wonder whether it were a Parliament or a court-martial. Only one of the five Imperial Chancellors, Caprivi, was a soldier outright. Both Bismarck and Prince von Bülow had to be raised to the rank of general before they were deemed fully fit to fill that office. Prince von Hohenlohe was too old to be put in regimentals, and was taken as the philosopher he was, but Herr von Bethmann Hollweg saved his reputation by being or becoming a reserve officer.

So it is throughout civil life: the soldier is everything, the civilian just what remains. The common idea—to which, however, the German political and pictorial Press has accustomed us—of the officer as a gorgeous creature swaggering along the footpath with clattering sabre and sweeping the other passengers unceremoniously into the road is, of course, a caricature. But a caricature is only an exaggeration of reality, and though the officer may not often show his contempt of civilians in violent ways, his spirit of superiority is as strong to-day as ever. Moreover, there is a disposition on the part of the rest of the community to accept the distinction between "military" and "civilian" as fundamental, to its own hurt. So systematically has the superiority of the military caste been impressed on the German people that

in some ranks of life it is one of the first aims of social ambition to counteract the disadvantage of civilianism by seeking contact with the favoured profession. There are thousands of worthy men in all branches of civil life, scholars, professors, officials, judges, manufacturers, members of parliament, who are prouder of their rank and uniform as officers of reserve than of their positions and achievements as private citizens.

Nevertheless, it is a common complaint, aired every time the army estimates are discussed in the Reichstag, that middle-class officers have little chance of high preferment and are not even admitted into many regiments. The *Vossische Zeitung* stated some time ago that all the officers belonging to the Emperor's military *suite*, all save one of the adjutants of the princes royal, nearly all the adjutants of the reigning princes, all the marshals and colonel-generals, and with few exceptions the generals, lieutenant-generals, and major-generals belonged to the nobility, while not one of the dozen highest military appointments had ever been filled by an officer belonging to the middle classes.

The whole atmosphere of the officers' corps is one of exclusiveness. It has its own class conventions, its own code of honour, and its own social penalties, and to all these rigid conformity must be rendered. Officers must submit their disputes to the appointed court of honour, and on its order must duel or take their discharge: even refusal for conscientious reasons continually leads to the cashiering of honourable and capable men. Nothing is allowed to diminish the soldier's respect for his calling or to discredit the business of war. When Verestchagin's vivid battle-pictures were exhibited in Berlin officers were forbidden to visit the show, and during the present war cinema exhibitions of some of the more lurid effects of warfare have been suppressed in German towns.

II. The Political Side of Militarism

But all abuses of militarism from the social side are of minor importance when compared with the political

use made of this powerful weapon by the Crown and the party of ascendancy. For over a century militarism has been the enemy of political liberty in Prussia. Relying on its support, Kings have broken their promises of constitutional reform, popular movements have been thwarted, and Prussia has retained its unenviable reputation as the most backward State in Germany in political matters. The army is supposed to be above politics, but it is in fact administered in the spirit of the reactionary Junker class, from which the officers' corps are largely recruited, and which has created its worst traditions. In Prussia officers suspected of Liberal views are marked men, and their only hope of a fair chance of promotion and even of a comfortable life is either to keep their convictions carefully to themselves or to fall in with the dominant sentiments. That has been the Prussian tradition at all times. Even a general like Gneisenau writhed under the petty persecution which he had to undergo at the hands of his King because he was a Liberal and was honest enough to let it be known. Should an officer be suspected of Socialist sympathies, even of the platonic kind, he is ordered to hand in his papers. Defending in the Reichstag the cashiering of such an officer, the Minister of War, Herr von Einem, said: "No man can serve two masters. If a man is an officer he serves the King; if he wishes to follow his conscience he must take his discharge." The best answer to such reasoning is the fact that hundreds of thousands of German Socialists are at the present moment serving their country with a devotion and ardour which not even the Emperor's abuse and the contumely of their military superiors have been able to destroy.

The same spirit of intolerance is shown in grosser forms towards the rank and file. "The caste spirit of the officers' corps," says a German writer, "has alienated the officer from the common soldier, whose instructor and leader he should be." This is not true of the officers of reserve, who are drawn from civil life and are never quite divorced from its ideas and spirit, but in Prussia it applies with but little reservation to the professional officers.

Drawn largely from a class which in Prussia has always been hostile to popular movements and devoid of popular sympathies, these officers carry into the army the absurd notions of superiority which they have imbibed from childhood. The sons of men accustomed to exercise an almost mediæval authority over the peasantry and farm labourers on their estates, the spirit of domination is in their blood, so that to them the private soldier's very claim for worthy treatment is a symptom of disaffection. In a country whose industrial population has imbibed Social Democratic teaching so freely it is impossible that the barracks should be free from politicians of the class whom the Emperor regards as "enemies of the Fatherland"; but if Socialism is far too widespread in the army to be suppressed, no pains are spared to penalize known sympathizers when guilt can be brought home to them. Socialist newspapers and literature of all kinds are prohibited; Socialist restaurants and beer-houses are placed under military boycott; the open expression of Socialist views is punished; and where the superior officers are more than usually stupid, and the non-commissioned officers more than usually coarse, Socialist recruits are assigned the hardest and least pleasant duties, and let them be as efficient as they will they have no hope of promotion.

The lamentable prevalence of cruelty and persecution by non-commissioned officers as disclosed in the Reichstag with monotonous regularity in every debate on the army estimates, and used with so much effect as part of the Socialist indictment of militarism, has not even the excuse of a disciplinary purpose. It is rather the expression of an inherent grossness and brutality which have marked Prussian military rule at all times. This is the sort of thing which the German public is continually compelled to read of in spite of all that has been done by the popular parties in the Reichstag to induce the military authorities to combat cruelty with a resolute hand:

"Several non-commissioned officers of the First Regiment of the Field Artillery of the Guard were summoned at Berlin before a divisional court-martial charged

with cruelly maltreating their recruits. Not for five years has the German public been shocked by such disgraceful details. One of the ruffians arraigned, a sergeant named Thamm, is accused of misconduct and maltreatment in over 600 cases. The worst case was that of a gunner named Knobbe, who recently committed suicide to escape from Thamm and his like. This unfortunate 'defender of the Fatherland' was so maltreated that he was obliged to go to hospital. When he returned cured to barracks the torture was renewed, and to escape it he flung himself from a window three stories high. Kicks, cuffings, pulling of ears till the blood came, and lashings with driving whips were among the ordinary means employed by these brutes to enforce discipline and 'waken up' backward men. When the witnesses were asked by the Court why they did not complain to their superiors, they replied they were afraid that their lot would be in consequence worse instead of better. General surprise is expressed here that this systematic cruelty, which has been proceeding for years, was apparently unknown to the officers of the regiment."

Deputy Erzberger, who strains a point in favour of the Government whenever he can, said in the Reichstag not long ago: "A captain under whom a non-commissioned officer had committed 1500 cases of serious and 300 of light ill-treatment of soldiers was punished because he allowed these acts to occur. And now this man has suddenly been advanced to the rank of major and division adjutant over the heads of a whole series of seniors." "No wonder," he added, "there is talk of favouritism."

The defenders of militarism talk glibly about the dignity of universal service and the honour of the King's uniform. What they have not the wit to see is that every insult offered to a common soldier is an insult to the whole nation, and that the King's uniform is vilely disgraced by the bullies who make the lives of thousands of recruits a perpetual terror. Vicious as this system of persecution still is, it would have been infinitely worse but for the relentless revelations made in the Reichstag by the

Socialist party. The attitude of that party was thus stated by Deputy Ledebour so lately as January 1, 1914:

"If we are to have a people's army in reality very different measures will have to be adopted. To-day the term people's army is an absolute misnomer. The presupposition of a people's army is that the civil rights of the soldier shall in no wise be restricted, and that every soldier shall be subject to the civil law just in the same way as any other class of the population. It is said that this is impossible, but it is already the case in England. You talk of the King's uniform and how it must be respected. But the King's uniform is nowhere so infamously disgraced and besmirched as it is by soldiers wearing the uniforms of officers and non-commissioned officers."

Even the normal spirit of discipline in the army is unduly severe, and the sentences often passed by court-martials for light offences savour of cruelty and vindictiveness. Even the faithful apologist of the Prussian spirit, Treitschke, admits that the doctrine of unconditional obedience is developed in the army "almost to sternness." It was stated in the Reichstag several years ago that during a period of five years 100,000 court-martialled soldiers had been sentenced to an aggregate period of 2300 years of penal servitude and 16,000 years of imprisonment. When last year a specially flagrant case of cruelty was discussed by the Reichstag all parties joined in condemnation and agreed that the existing scale of punishments was unduly severe. The head of the Government and the War Minister, strange to say, endorsed both verdicts, and promised amendment.

III. The Revelations of Zabern

It is little more than a year (December 1913) since the military caste gave not only the German nation but the whole world an inimitable object-lesson in the spirit of true Prussian militarism. This was the episode of Zabern, in Alsace, an episode unique only as to results, but for the rest merely typical of the spirit which

provoked it. In that little garrison town a raw lieutenant, in addressing his company regarding certain alleged acts of unfriendliness to the troops, offered a money reward to any soldier who should "stick" a future offender and bring him to barracks. In making this offer the young man applied to the population of Alsace a well-known term of contumely, and this fact becoming known, his next public appearance with his men was the signal for an unfriendly demonstration. Troops were called out, leading to increased excitement; machine-guns were placed in the streets; and in spite of the protest of the civil authorities, the colonel of the regiment illegally proclaimed martial law, and indiscriminately arrested a host of municipal and even Crown officers and private citizens for no other reason than that they happened to be going to their homes, imprisoning thirty of them in a cellar. A reign of terror was exercised by the military, until protests to the Government and the War Office brought relief.

In the later judicial proceedings it was proved that when warned that his unprovoked incitement of the population was likely to lead to bloodshed the colonel had said that "bloodshed would be a good thing," that civilians had been arrested for "intending to laugh," and that the soldiers, egged on by their officers, had "behaved like Cossacks," their most doughty deed being the stabbing of a helpless cripple in the back. The Court in the end acquitted the incriminated colonel not because it held him guiltless, but on the ground that he "did not know that he had acted illegally." It is significant that he justified his acts by a Prussian Cabinet Order of the year 1820.

The nation and the Reichstag did not take the same lenient view of the matter. Never before was public protest against the excesses of militarism so general or so vehement. The Imperial Chancellor did his best to pacify the nation without displeasing the military authorities, though finally committing himself to the opinion that the Zabern officers had certainly "transgressed the limits of the law," while the War Minister

defended military authority without reserve. Nevertheless, the Reichstag, in order to emphasize its conviction that someone had done wrong and someone ought to be hanged, by 293 to 54 votes passed a vote of condemnation on the Government as the most convenient victim. The only dissentient voices were those of the Conservative-Junker party in the Imperial and Prussian Diets and of the Crown Prince, who while the matter was still *sub judice* telegraphed to the officer commanding the Zabern garrison his congratulations and approval in the laconic telegram, now historical, "Go it strong!" ("Immer feste darauf"). So intimately is the military system bound up with the autocratic system of government, however, that the Reichstag's vote was so much beating of the air. "In the interest of military authority," said a Radical deputy, "the Zabern officers have not been removed, and in the interest of monarchical authority the Imperial Chancellor has similarly been retained."

So little did the Emperor and his advisers take their lesson to heart that national passion had no sooner quietened down than the mischief-making colonel received a Prussian Order and the conciliatory Governor of Alsace-Lorraine was replaced by one of the most reactionary of Prussian bureaucrats. "Only Prussian officials, only Prussian jurists, for Alsace-Lorraine, and now a Prussian Conservative as Governor!" exclaimed the leading Berlin Liberal newspaper. It was a sign that the old course was to go on as before.

Now that German political parties are united in applauding a war the genesis and many of the incidents of which reflect the worst spirit of Prussian militarism, it is encouraging to reflect that a year ago they were protesting that Prussian militarism was Germany's worst curse, for that fact suggests that their present attitude is an aberration which time and salutary discipline may cure. Several of the utterances of December 1913 deserve to be recalled as a reflection of Germany when it was still in its normal mind:

Dr. Paasche, speaking for the National Liberals, said in the Reichstag on December 11, 1913:

"The Imperial Chancellor cannot console himself with the fact that this is a single case. It is of no consequence whether the Zabern *régime* shall be abolished a little sooner or later—it is a question of the spirit which is reflected by the whole proceeding. We have a people's army, in which not only unripe recruits serve, but in case of need reservists and Landwehr men. These will follow their leaders gladly if they are able to respect their efficiency, but not because they know that a leader is ready to send his sword through the body of any civilian who chances to insult him."

Dr. Friedrich Naumann, the Radical leader, and lately the defender of the violation of the Belgian treaty of neutrality, said in the same place on January 23, 1914:

"Choose any place in Baden, or Würtemberg, or Bavaria, and let the lieutenants and their colonel conduct themselves there as they did in Zabern, and you would see what would happen! . . . With all respect for regulations, the internal order of a country is not kept by regulations alone. What is needed is more respect for men, even though they are only civilians, only Alsacers. The other view is called the specially soldier's view, and big words are talked about our army, which is said to be a 'people's army.' Well, if it is that we must demand that it shall not be entirely devoid of popular sympathies. The people who at Zabern have been spoken of as the 'populace' (*Plebs*) and the 'masses' are, after all, the fathers, brothers, and sisters of those who make up the nation in arms; they are the people on whose industry and enterprise the entire military system rests. Let us have respect for the people, for the civilians; then we can have 70,000 soldiers in Alsace without harm. But when our soldiers go to Alsace with the idea that they are entering an enemy's country, and when the officers presume to play a political *rôle*, and even to decide whether blood shall flow or not, the country sees in the army not a 'people's army,' but a foreign element. That is the indictment which is made to-day.

"It is a fateful question which is put to the German army: it is the question whether force is united with

intelligence and humanity. The question which the proceedings at Zabern represent to us all is whether the German people possesses mind as well as power (laughter from the Conservatives). You may indeed laugh, for you have none. The nation knows that there are spiritual values for which no Cabinet Order can be a substitute. Why has Colonel von Reutter become a famous person? Not because he has done his duty, for hundreds of thousands of people do that every day of their lives without anyone thanking them for it. He has become famous because he has represented the political soldier's order of ideas. For that reason he is applauded as the 'true soldier' by all who want to break down the democratized order of society, as being an encumberment to the 'true soldier.' 'Attention!' 'Quick march!' 'Fire!' 'Civilians out of the way!'—so these people congratulate and telegraph from North and South."

Speaking for the Social Democrats, Deputy Ledebour said at the same sitting:

"It is a question whether we are to have in Germany the supremacy of the sword or a real popular State. The gentlemen of the middle-class parties have hitherto cherished the illusion that we live in a State in which the civil law is supreme, and that it is only accidentally that the too zealous Pretorians have disturbed our comfortable relationships. That is fundamentally false. If it were merely a question of a single lieutenant or colonel we should have no need to trouble ourselves in the matter further. But what have we seen? In the first day's debate the Minister of War took the standpoint that the military can claim unlimited supremacy in the State."

Finally, a thoughtful writer in *Das freie Wort* for February 1914 summed up the wider issues opened up by the Zabern incident as follows:

"With the name of Zabern is connected a bitter struggle on the question of civil law *versus* separate military law, of constitutionalism *versus* the absolutism of a long-forgotten era. The discussions which have taken place in Parliament, the Press, and public meetings have not centred in a young and scarcely fledged lieutenant,

nor yet the regimental commander whose instrument he was, but in a question of power and right of the most momentous importance, namely, whether in the modern constitutional State there is a profession which sets itself above the general law and claims to be the sovereign expression of State power and therefore legally subject to no outside authority."

These condemnations of militarism by German authorities need no further emphasis. They unquestionably represented at the time the dominant opinion of the German nation, and however present events may seem to point to a different conclusion, there can be no doubt that the nation at large will be as little disposed in the future as in the past to tolerate this menace to its liberties except under a compulsion which lies in the system of government itself. This is particularly true of the Southern States, where militarism has never been truly acclimatized, but is still an alien and discordant element in the national life. Nowhere would the downfall of militarism be welcomed more sincerely than in these States, which heartily deplore its continual menace, and suffer, both directly and indirectly, from its malign influence. They resent it still more because it is the special emblem of Prussia's power and the sole argument on which its claim to dominate the rest of Germany is based. A Prussia set in the midst of the States as the first amongst equals in virtue of a larger population and area, a superior national organization, and greater material and moral resource would be welcomed and respected, but the South is ever conscious that the predominance which Prussia asserts and of which it really is proud is that based on its military strength, and on its power to determine all matters of military organization and administration with little or no regard for the rest of Germany. Prussian hegemony so justified has never been acceptable to the South and is less acceptable to-day than ever.

In what has been said I would not be misunderstood, or do injustice to the true attitude of Germans to their army. They are proud of their army, as a nation should

be, and any reflection upon it touches the national self-esteem in a specially susceptible place. For as the army represents the whole of the nation, every family has a direct interest in it and a direct share in everything that makes for its credit or discredit. But universal service is not militarism, and brutal non-commissioned officers are not the army, any more than the military spirit is necessarily the spirit of patriotism or a war is righteous because generals and politicians and philosophers say it is. United though it is in the present struggle, the overwhelming part of the German nation is at one with foreign critics in recognizing that militarism, as it has been described, is an evil and not a source of pride or of real national strength, and that things will not be right until the army takes its spirit and temper from the nation instead of the nation taking its orders from the army.

CHAPTER VII

THE EMPEROR AND *WELTPOLITIK*

I. The Bismarckian Tradition in Foreign Politics

The German Emperor has claimed the foreign policy of his Government during the past quarter of a century as peculiarly his own. The claim is just, and as the policy is his, so also are the results. If there is one part of German history from which Bismarck, did he still live, would have altogether dissociated himself, it is that of foreign affairs. It is here that there has been the completest departure from Bismarck's traditions, and that the heaviest harvest of failure and disaster has been reaped.

In foreign politics Bismarck may but seldom have been as harmless as a dove, but he was generally as wise as a serpent, as cunning also and as cautious. When he adopted "oblique and even crooked ways," to use the phrase of his secretary and friend Abeken, it was usually for large as well as advantageous ends, and trying his policy by the test of apparent success, it may be conceded that where he blundered once other people would have blundered a hundred times.

It was one of Bismarck's maxims to play for safety, and in accordance with this maxim it was his constant endeavour to keep Germany out of embarrassing foreign complications, and when he laid down office against his will he left the ship of State with a clean bill of health and a fairly clear course. Germany even then was becoming dangerously strong, for successive Army Bills had enormously increased its defensive forces; but it was not outspokenly aggressive, and it had not got on the nerves of the rest of Europe.

What Bismarck's ultimate ambitions for his country may have been we can only speculate; he professed, however, to regard Germany as, in the phrase of Metternich, a "satiated" State, whose territorial ambitions were satisfied, and his chief concern was to conserve and confirm the status created at the close of the war with France. All he asked of Germany's neighbours was that they would give it peace within its own borders and allow it to develop its resources in tranquillity. He even in later years acquired colonies against his will, and to the last, after ceasing to be Chancellor, he declared that he was "no colony man." There is no reason to doubt Bismarck's candour when he wrote in 1891:

"Germany is perhaps the single Great Power in Europe which is not tempted by any object which can only be obtained by a successful war. It is our interest to maintain peace, while without exception our Continental neighbours have wishes, either secret or officially avowed, which cannot be fulfilled except by war. We must direct our policy in accordance with these facts; that is, we must do our best to prevent war or to limit it."

It was in the hope of averting potential rivalries and animosities, and of confirming the *status quo*, that Bismarck concluded an alliance first with Austria (1879) and later with Italy (1882), thus completing the Triple Alliance, and, to make safety doubly sure, effected a sort of reinsurance by concluding a secret agreement (1884) by which Germany, Austria, and Russia bound themselves to preserve neutrality should any one of them be attacked. The Triple Alliance survives to the present day; the reinsurance policy expired in 1890. Had France been willing to accept as final the readjustment of its eastern frontier Bismarck would probably have sacrificed Austria's friendship for one across the Vosges.

To the last, therefore, Bismarck's foreign policy was conservative, unprovocative, unaggressive. The judgment which he said could not be passed on Napoleon was true of himself, that he "exercised wise moderation after the greatest successes."

I do not know when the phrase *Weltpolitik* or world-politics for the first time became current in German political controversy, but so far as my reading and recollection go it plays no part in Bismarck's parliamentary speeches—until his retirement almost the only ones he ever made—just as these speeches make no mention of "German *Kultur*," for many years the theme of so much political literature and oratory.

With the accession of William II both phrases soon began to receive a wide and ominous notoriety. The Emperor inherited, together with a quite superstitious reverence for his ancestors, a fervid admiration for the statecraft and military exploits of Frederick the Great in particular, and it is this Hohenzollern who has most influenced his mind and determined his policy as a ruler. Frederick had made Prussia great amongst the States of Europe, so it was to be his special mission to give the new Empire a dominating place in the wider arena of world-politics. Bismarck was well aware of his young master's ambition and hankering for a policy of action. He admitted on one occasion that there was "something of the old Fritz in him," but added that "he must make a wise use of it nowadays." He kept the new impulse in check so long as he was able, which was less than two years (June 15, 1888, to March 20, 1890). When the old pilot was dropped and the Emperor himself took the helm, it was to sail an entirely new course. "My course," he said, "is the right one, and I shall follow it." It was thus that he opened the era of *Weltpolitik* and Imperialism.

The Emperor proclaimed the new course enthusiastically in speeches made in every part of the country, though the pearls of his flamboyant oratory were as ever reserved for his own kingdom. He made fiery appeals to the national imagination; he spoke in seductive words of the urgent need for expansion; he declared confidently that Providence intended Germany to lead the world and, in the words of Geibel, to make good all its deficiencies; he retold the brilliant conquests of Frederick the Great, and almost invited his people to believe that a greater

than Frederick was here; he bade them only accept his word and follow him, for "I lead you to glorious times."

In this declaration of a deliberate policy of Imperialism there was at first no suggestion of sinister design against other countries. How Germany was to assert its divinely ordained position of domination without interfering with existing rights was not said, but the very vagueness of the programme was perhaps its chief attraction. In those early days the German nation had no idea of a dominion wrested by force, and whatever the Emperor himself may have intended he took good care not to create unnecessary alarm. By and by, however, the admission had to be made that Germany's world mission could not be realized by means entirely pacific. There had hitherto been only talk of peace, its blessedness and its need. Now hints of another kind began to be thrown out. We find the Emperor avowing a fixed determination that Germany should be accepted as a sort of world arbiter in such declarations as "Nothing must henceforth be settled in the world without the intervention of Germany and the German Emperor," and "Present events invite us to forget internal discord; let us be united in case we should be compelled to intervene in the polities of the world." Soon he cannot open a barracks without bidding his soldiers "keep their swords sharpened and their powder dry"; he cannot open a Rhine bridge without reminding his hearers that "this work, destined to develop peaceful communications, may serve for graver purposes." He tells the German nation that its future is henceforth on the water and that the trident belongs to its hand. And a growing impatience to be and to do something great abroad is betrayed by utterances like the following:

"Let every European and every German merchant abroad, and particularly every foreigner on whose soil we may be, or with whom we may have business, know clearly that the German Michel with his shield, adorned by the Imperial eagle, has been sent out to afford protection to all who have a right to it. Should anyone

endeavour to do violence to our good rights I shall come down on him with my mailed fist."

"We are the salt of the earth."

"Where the German eagle has taken possession and set its talons that land is and will remain German."

"I think I may claim that hitherto no one has injured the honour of our flag so long as I have reigned. I can give security for that and therefore I can say, 'Wherever you lead my flag shall follow you.'" (To the merchants of Hamburg.)

How far Germany has departed from the traditions of Bismarck may be judged by comparing sentiments like the foregoing with the cautious words of Bismarck, spoken on February 8, 1888, when the Emperor was still under his guidance:

"Every great Power which seeks to exert pressure on the politics of other countries and to direct affairs outside the sphere of interest which God has assigned to it carries on politics of power and not of interest; it works for prestige. We shall not do that."

The new course thus marked an entire departure from the policy of restraint and "satiety" pursued by Bismarck for over twenty years. A German writer says: "There is no continuity between the time of William I and the present. The era of William II has no other connexion with that of William I save that the heir is still able to live on the capital left to him in the confidence of the German nation and in our love for the name of Hohenzollern." * Under the Emperor's influence Germany became an altogether different Germany, different in temper, in its political endeavours and friendships, and in its entire attitude to the rest of the world.

Most of all the Emperor has thrown to the winds the policy of Bismarck in European affairs. When he came to the throne Germany still retained and fostered the friendship of Russia. The two nations may not have loved one another, but the relations between their Courts were cordial; the German Government was ever ready to conciliate St. Petersburg and to render it service, even

* "Unser Kaiser und sein Volk."

of the baser sort, in case of need; while the Prussian Junkers swore by the Czar, absolutism, and the knout, as they would be ready to do again if they were allowed.

Here strong traditions united the neighbouring States, and they seemed to wear well. Successive Prussian kings had regarded the good-will of Russia as of paramount importance. When in 1859 Frederick William IV heard of overtures being made for an alliance between Russia and France he exclaimed, "That must be prevented. Someone must be sent at once." Bismarck himself, then a rising diplomat with expectations of better things, was proposed as a special envoy to the Russian Court, but the King thought him too young and chose another instead. Nevertheless, it fell to Bismarck's lot in later years, as ambassador to St. Petersburg, as Prussian Minister-President, and as Imperial Chancellor, to cement the old-standing friendship, and to the end it was his care to prevent any impassable breach between the two countries. Events at last compelled him to take sides with Austria against the eastern neighbour, but he did it with misgivings, conscious that from Germany's standpoint a friendly understanding with Russia was almost of greater importance than a formal alliance with Austria. Whatever else might happen, Bismarck was determined that Germany and Russia should not cross swords, and he was prepared to make almost any sacrifice rather than face such a danger.

"A war with Russia," he said to Prince Hohenlohe on October 27, 1883, "in which we should have to side with Austria, would be a misfortune, for we could gain nothing —we should not even get back our expenses. Then such a war would also oblige us eventually to re-establish the Kingdom of Poland as far as the Dwina and Dnieper." He once said that "the very idea of coalitions gave him nightmares," and the worst of these nightmares arose from the thought of Russia and France in alliance against Germany. Always this possibility haunted him, and with it the fear that if such a trial of strength occurred things would not go well with Germany.

Dr. Busch, the recorder of his table-talk, relates a

conversation of 1888 in which the Chancellor said : " It is not yet certain that Russia would take up arms against us, if we were again attacked (*sic*) by the French, but if the Russians were to declare war upon us the French would certainly join them immediately, and in such a war we should not be so very certain to win, while it would be a great misfortune even if we were victorious." * To Prince Hohenlohe he said a little later (December 15, 1889), in discussing the same contingency, " As far as we are concerned we shall begin no war with Russia or with France," but " at any rate the war would break out with both countries at once, and then it would be doubtful whether we should be victorious enough to be able to dictate terms to Russia." In his retirement Bismarck continued of the same mind. " Russia is in any case a better neighbour than many another," he said to Prince Hohenlohe in 1895 ; " for that reason do not injure our friendship with Russia. . . . We are in that position so desirable for Great Powers that we do not envy each other anything and that neither has anything that is enviable to the other—a rare case in politics."

It is a safe prediction that had Bismarck remained in office only long enough to see his impetuous master outlive his youthful humours the later disasters of German *Weltpolitik* would not have occurred. With or without the Emperor's active connivance, yet certainly relying with full justification on his support, Austria's policy in the Balkans became increasingly aggressive, and every new advance in that quarter meant a rebuff for Russia. Recognizing at last that Germany either could not or would not exercise a restraining influence upon its ally, Russia looked out for a more reliable friend, and this, as Bismarck had long ago foreseen, could only be France. The alliance between the autocracy of the East and the republic of the West was formally concluded in 1891.

Meantime the Emperor went out of his way to offend other nations whose good-will, if not essential, was at least worth having. In 1899 he sent his famous telegram to President Krüger, and thereby inflicted on British pride

* " Bismarck : Some Secret Pages in his History."

a needless and purposeless affront which has rankled ever since. No sooner, however, had he recovered from the shock of surprise which British resentment caused him than he found an opportunity of offending England and France together. In 1900 he went to Palestine and there theatrically proclaimed himself as at once the protector of the Christians and the patron of the Moslems—a Sovereign who had not a Moslem under his rule! "May the Sultan and the three hundred million Mussulmans scattered over the earth," he declared, "be assured that the German Emperor will always be their friend." Seeing that a considerable portion of these three hundred million Mussulmans were under British rule and were very well satisfied with it, this empty patronage was hardly less tactless than the message of sympathy to the Transvaal Boers. France equally regarded it as a veiled threat to its African dominion, while Russia saw in the Emperor's philandering with Turkey a menace to its aspirations for a maritime outlet in the South.

The Emperor's later exploits have simply been variations of a studied policy of provocation. When in October 1908 Austria, in open defiance of Russia, then still barely convalescent after the untoward war with Japan, seized Bosnia, Germany applauded the act with a promptness which suggested that the annexation had been arranged, and promised to stand by its ally "arrayed in shining armour." Twice within the last six years, by forcible measures which for the time threatened the peace of Europe, Germany has challenged the position of France in Morocco, though France went there on Bismarck's advice.

England's friendship has been similarly sacrificed and its feeling of security shaken by German naval ambitions ostentatiously aimed at the destruction of British maritime supremacy. Directly official Germany believed itself strong enough to resist, and if policy required it to defy, any probable Continental combination, it wantonly threw away the chance of friendship with this country, which thereupon sought a reconciliation with the two nations with which it had been bickering for a generation,

yet even then with the hope that Germany itself would ultimately come into the new concert. Anglo-German relationships have undergone many and strange vicissitudes during the past twenty years; they have shown all the fluctuations of temperature of an English May, from summer heat to winter cold. If, however, there have been many occasions of real friction and still more of groundless suspicions, there have also been times when official Germany might, if it had wished, have removed the hindrances in the way of a good understanding, or at least have so far abated them as to pave the way for a later and certain reconciliation such as the two peoples themselves have always at heart desired. The final breach between two nations having so much in common, which under altered conditions might have advanced hand in hand on the same path of peace and progress, will rank as one of the most tragic catastrophes of history.

Not even in its relationships with America has Germany been careful to avoid occasions of offence. The candour with which certain German publicists have challenged the Monroe Doctrine has hitherto aroused amusement rather than suspicion. It is different when a German ambassador accredited to Washington deliberately threatens that should it be to his country's interest that doctrine, too, must go.

A critic of German foreign policy, writing in the *Neue Rundschau* so recently as April 1913, said:

"We have tried to carry on *Weltpolitik*, we have bustled about in every direction, we have dreamed dreams of boundless colonial expansion, and cherished deep in our hearts the belief that rivalry with England is the divinely ordained objective of our world political and commercial ambitions. Our foreign policy began to think in continents. English export industrialism and colonialism were accepted as the recognized models for our own development. Herr von Tirpitz was recognized as, in all essentials, the most considerable statesman since Bismarck. Our sea-power grew fabulously and with it the claim—trumpeted thrice a day to all the winds—that henceforth no decision, wherever or whenso-

ever it might be, should be taken without Germany's directing and determining voice."

And what has Germany got for this *Weltpolitik*? The answer can admit of no uncertainty. Germany has weakened itself immeasurably both at home and abroad. Its hopes of territorial conquest have not been realized; of those "moral conquests" which a Prussian King was urged to make in the middle of last century there is still no trace; it has lost most of its old friends, and it has won no new friends worth the name. Finally, it has thrown all Europe out of balance, and has produced throughout the world a feeling of the utmost unrest, anxiety, and alarm. When in 1782 Russia, France, Austria, and England allied themselves against Frederick the Great, that Sovereign had to confess of Prussia: "We are so isolated that we cannot find one Power in Europe willing to give us the shadow of an alliance." The cause of isolation was the same in that day as in this—no one trusted Prussia then, as no one trusts Germany to-day, because of its boundless ambitions and its restless spirit of aggression.

To Germany alone is also due the exhausting competition in armaments which has for years converted all Europe into an armed camp. Here, again, it is not only we in England who make the accusation, for it is made even more emphatically by the Germans themselves. "Germany," said Deputy Stücklein in the Reichstag on March 17, 1909, "has brought over all Europe the evil of rivalry in armaments."

"It was to be expected," said Deputy Roske in the same place on June 10, 1913, "that Germany's arming would lead to counter-measures in France and Russia. In France the increase of the German army has produced a genuine fever of armament, for the nation is filled with apprehension of German attacks. The reintroduction of the three years' system in France is a direct measure of defence and no French Minister would have dared to propose it had not the new German Army Bill been introduced."

By a curious irony, one of the most incisive condemna-

tions ever pronounced upon German *Weltpolitik*, with its spirit of universal meddlesomeness, came from the ex-Imperial Chancellor, Prince von Bülow, who said in the Reichstag on February 19, 1907: "What to-day complicates and makes difficult our situation are our oversea endeavours and interests. If we were not involved in this direction, if we were not vulnerable in consequence, we should not be so susceptible on the Continent, and it would be easier than it is to avoid friction with England."

To this unexpected avowal by Bülow of the weakness of his own policy the spokesman of the Radical party, Dr. Wiemer, rejoined:

"It was extremely interesting to hear the Chancellor's confession that our oversea policy complicates and makes difficult our situation at home. For that is what we have always said—that Germany's European position, which for us is the principal matter, would not be made easier but more difficult by engagements of the kind. This holds good of our unfruitful colonial policy, but still more of what is called our *Weltpolitik*."

II. The Victory of Chauvinism

"The greatest happiness for Germany is peace," Bismarck said on May 22, 1890, "and I do not believe that a German Emperor will ever turn his gaze to the map with Napoleonic thoughts of conquest." To-day a German Emperor is endeavouring to impose upon Europe a second and a worse despotism—worse because the new despotism of the imitation Napoleon lacks altogether the intelligence, the enlightenment, the benevolence of the old.

One day in the not distant future there will, one may hope, be sore searching of hearts in Germany when the nation looks back upon the political history and polemic of the past two decades, and comes to recognize clearly how events and tendencies have been working surely and steadily, as by an inexorable necessity, for the catastrophe which has at last arrived. For a long time

"the coming war" had been accepted in ruling and political circles as one of the certain facts of the European situation, though the exact date and in one particular the *personnel* of the combatants remained still enigmatical. For the last six or eight years, indeed, Germany may be said to have lived in an atmosphere of war.

No one can doubt this who has watched the tone of the political Press and followed the debates in the Reichstag from session to session.

"Chauvinism has grown enormously in Germany during the last decade," Professor Otfried Nippold wrote last year. "This fact most impresses those who have returned to Germany after living for a long time abroad. Many such Germans have expressed to me their surprise at the change which has come over the soul of the nation in recent years, and I myself can say from experience how astonished I was, on returning to Germany after long absence, to see this psychological transformation."*

Chauvinist politicians, firebrand publicists, military writers, and sensational journalists innumerable have all done their part to bring about the horrors at which the world is now aghast, yet of which it is charitable to believe not one in a hundred of them thought seriously. The Government has not openly encouraged these evil agitations, but it has made no serious attempt to abate the war fever. Its own combative spirit was well expressed by the Imperial Chancellor in 1911 when he said: "As far as Germany is concerned there will be no disarmament, no arbitration, and no naval agreement with Great Britain"—in a word, no measure at all that might create the mistaken impression that Germany loved concord better than strife. The Socialist deputy Ledebour, who knows more about German foreign and colonial affairs than all the Ministerialists put together, said in the Reichstag just two years ago, in the course of a powerful indictment of his Government's foreign policy:

"If we had to trust that the peace of Europe would

* "Der deutsche Chauvinismus," 1913.

be preserved by the action of European and particularly German diplomacy we should indeed be forsaken by all good spirits."

As long ago as September 1908 the late leader of the Socialist party, Herr Bebel, predicted that war must at last be regarded as inevitable. "Preparations for war," he then wrote, "are being carried on with such vehemence, and they claim such an immense part of the resources of the nation, that this state of things cannot last for very long." From that time matters went from bad to worse. How convinced were the earnest friends of peace of the danger looming ahead may be illustrated by the remark made in the Reichstag in December 1912 by Dr. David, who anticipated the first, but not the second, step in the tragedy which began at the end of July last. "If Austria," he said, "were to attack Serbia and Russia went to Serbia's help, we should not be bound by the terms of the Triple Alliance to resort to arms." To this speculation the Government discreetly made no reply. The same apprehensions of imminent hostilities have prevailed in France. "The Germans hate us so much," wrote M. Clemenceau in his *L'Homme libre* of July 27, 1913, "that they shout abroad through all their Press that it is necessary to prepare for a war of destruction against us, and we have to reckon with a sudden attack."*

Playing with fire may be dangerous, but it is not so dangerous as playing with firearms, and Germany has for a long time engaged in this frivolity with utter recklessness of the consequences. It can hardly be doubted that the very familiarity with which the issue of war has been handled both by writers and the public caused the prospect of the thing itself to lose half its

* As a specimen of the fatuous miscalculations upon which the prospects of the "inevitable" war were estimated in Germany, the following is notable. The *Berlin Post* of April 21, 1913, wrote of the French that "they have sunk to so low a level in all the virtues of a strong and proud nation that from the military standpoint it must be regarded as a doubtful pleasure to have to fight such a people."

dread. All through these recent years there has been a growing disposition to speculate in war as a serious factor in European politics, until at last the conviction of its certainty almost gave relief. The military exercise of the *Kriegsspiel* became the pastime of hosts of civilian writers, who have planned campaigns by the dozen and won victories by the hundred in Russia and France, in England and the Low Countries. It is said that for years the annual output of war books and pamphlets in Germany has averaged many hundreds.

A chance list, which lies before me as I write, of thirty-two German war pamphlets published during the three years 1911–1913 shows six to have contemplated a war with England, seven a war with France, and nine a European conflagration. Among the titles are "Germany, Awake!" "World Conflagration," "War or Peace with England?" "The Coming World War," "France's End in the Year 19—?" "Revenge!" "You Want Alsace and Lorraine? We Will Take all Lorraine and More!" "The European War of 1913," and "War—Mobilize in 19—!"

Three ideas have been specially prominent in the minds of these writers—the subjugation of France, the crippling of Russia, and as a last and crowning feat the downfall of Britain and the British Empire. Perhaps the majority of them have been men of little standing, but they have been able to appeal to high authority. Treitschke in particular did his best to inoculate the national mind with the virus of ambition and envy. He looked to the day when Germany, after beating down all other nations under its feet, would be able to dictate peace to all the world.

"To whom will belong the sceptre of the universe?" he asked. "What nation will impose its wishes on the other enfeebled and decadent peoples? Will it not be Germany that will have the mission to ensure the peace of the world? Russia, that immense Colossus still in process of formation, and with feet of clay, will be absorbed in its domestic and economic difficulties. England, stronger in appearance than in reality, will

without any doubt see her colonies detach themselves from her and exhaust themselves in fruitless struggles. France, given over to internal dissensions and the strife of parties, will sink into hopeless decadence. As to Italy, she will have her work cut out to ensure a crust of bread to her children. The future belongs to Germany, to which Austria will attach herself if she wishes to survive."

General von Bernhardi has preached the same doctrine of Germany's world mission, and advocated its realization by violent means, and his book "Germany and the Next War" was written to prepare the way for the war which has come. In the next war Germany was to "square accounts with France" by bleeding it to death, and the other Powers which still stood in Germany's way were to be crushed one by one. Not only have the German strategists substantially adopted Bernhardi's plan of campaign—without executing it—but his forecast of the constellations of Powers which were to confront each other in the dread Armageddon has proved correct, even to the belated appearance on the scene of Turkey. Turkey, he says, is Germany's "natural ally," and is of "paramount importance" to it as "the only Power which can threaten England's position in Egypt and thus menace the short sea-route and the land communications to India."

In one thing only has Bernhardi's advice not been followed by his war-lord. He was not prepared to violate the Belgian treaty of neutrality, not indeed from scruples, but because of the advantage of retaining Belgium as a neutral zone between Germany and France.

Teachings of this kind have had a powerful effect in stimulating the war movement, and in creating in German minds a belief that destiny had decreed an early appeal to arms. Almost it might be said that the German nation has been carried into war by a spirit of fatalism, which it has made no attempt to resist. This fatalism was undoubtedly strengthened by the occurrence of the centenary of the rising against Napoleon, which proved the precursor of a great national and political regeneration. Many writers have assumed that 1912,

1913, or 1914 would prove a sort of climacteric year, in which the great deeds done by the warriors of the Emancipation period would be repeated, and German history would begin a new era more brilliant than any that has preceded. "Should events happen as a hundred years ago, and a year of (national) drought and flood be followed by one of blood," wrote *Die Post* on January 1, 1913, "then the German nation will show that it is as able now as then to defy a world of enemies."

"That which is lacking in our diplomatists we must make good in brute force," said a well-known military politician and ex-Colonial Governor a few years ago. The spirit underlying these words has become confirmed by every recent failure to advance German aggressive ends by ill-considered diplomatic action, as in the case of the two interventions in Morocco. Attacking the present Imperial Chancellor in June 1910 because he did not then resolutely follow up strong words by strong deeds, the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, Bismarck's old mouthpiece, outspokenly advocated a policy of provocation in foreign affairs. "We shall never improve matters at home," said that journal, "until we have got into severe foreign complications—perhaps even into war—and have been compelled by such convulsions to bring ourselves together." The sending of the *Panther* to Agadir in June 1911 seemed a strong deed such as Germany needed in order to impress Europe, and it was welcomed by the Jingo Press with pæans of exultation, though these gave place to bitter disappointment when the gunboat was withdrawn and its exploit ended in a conference of the Powers. The Imperialists and Pan-Germanists confidently expected that Germany would come out of this conference at least with a Moroccan colony ready for immediate use, and their anger again flared up vehemently when it was found that the territorial gain was located in the Congo region. Inasmuch, however, as the Government expressed its complete satisfaction with the result of the conference, a result brought about, as it admitted, owing largely to the efforts of the British Foreign Secretary, now the best-

hated man in Germany, the Ministerial Press was bound for decency's sake to show restraint. The *Cologne Gazette* even lectured the fire-caters for the dangerous game they had been playing.

"Those Germans," it wrote on December 24, 1911, "who have been behaving as though they thought very lightly of war will perhaps now become a little more serious, seeing that a while ago, so far from there being a game of warlike fancies, we stood on the brink of a momentous decision."

About the same time the notorious General Deimling, then commanding the garrison in Mülhausen, in Alsace, in sending the reservists back to their homes after the exercises, had bidden them be on the *qui vive*. "Do not," he said, "when you put off your military coats divest yourselves of your military spirit. This advice is specially necessary to-day." From that time onward the war fever has grown in intensity. "We all know that blood is certain to flow," wrote Medical Councillor Dr. W. Fuchs in *Die Post* of January 28, 1912, "and the longer we wait the more there will be. But few people dare to follow the example of Frederick the Great and strike in without waiting until our enemies are ready." Speaking at a Pan-Germanist congress at Brunswick in December 1912, Lieutenant-General Liebert said: "There is the smell of blood in the air, and no one knows when the torch of war will blaze forth. There is talk of a drought year, a flood year, and a blood year, and it may be that when spring returns the Great Powers will be in collision." The *Reichsbote* wrote on January 7, 1913: "Apathy and indecision in our diplomatic circles, and the longing for peace at any price which is characteristic not only of high finance but of large sections of the population—these things rouse the indignation of those of us who were combatants of 1868 and 1870–71. Then it was a joy to live; to-day one might think one lived in the time before 1806, when the preservation of peace was regarded as the highest duty."

The Chauvinists have, in fact, talked war and thought war so long until they came to regard war as inevitable,

and from regarding it as inevitable to wishing to enter into it directly the conditions seemed opportune was only a short step further in the downward path, and a step which it was easy to justify from the standpoint both of logic and interest. "Never was the idea of a 'preventive' war so vigorously or so criminally trifled with as in recent years," wrote the editor of the Liberal review, the *Neue Rundschau*, in April 1913.

Bismarck waged three wars which he held to be necessary for the consolidation of Germany's position in Europe, but in later years he resolutely set his face against a policy of aggression, and to the last he repelled the idea of a war in which Germany should wantonly make the attack. A passage in one of his later speeches is of peculiar interest as illustrating the entire departure of modern German statesmanship, as directed by military ambitions, from the safe lines which he laid down.

"If I were to come to you to-day," he said in the Reichstag on February 8, 1888, only two years before he ceased to be Chancellor, "and to say to you—the circumstances being other than in my belief they now are—'We are seriously menaced by France and Russia; there is a prospect of our being attacked; and it is my belief as a diplomatist, judging by military intelligence, that it would be more advantageous for us that we should begin the attack and strike now, for a war of attack can be more advantageously waged, hence I beg the Diet to vote a credit of a milliard or half a milliard of marks, so that we may make war on our neighbours to-day'—well, gentlemen, I know not whether you would have sufficient confidence in me to grant me that sum, but I hope not. . . .

"If we ever make the attack the entire weight of *imponderabilia* which weigh far more heavily than material quantities would be on the side of our opponents whom we had attacked. Then 'holy Russia' would be indignant over the attack. France would be armed to the Pyrenees. A war into which we had not been driven by the popular desire will, of course, be waged if the Sovereign has regarded it as necessary and has declared it; it will also be waged with complete brilliancy and perhaps

victoriously, directly our soldiers have once come under fire and seen blood. But it will not have behind it the same *élan* and fire as a war in which we were attacked. I am therefore against a war of attack of any kind, and if war depends on our attacking first—the fire must be kindled by others, we shall not kindle it—neither the consciousness of our strength nor reliance on our allies shall deter us from continuing our endeavours to maintain the peace with the same zeal as hitherto. France we shall never attack."

It is only by comparing cautious and statesmanlike words like these with the criminal incitements to war with which the Chauvinists have debauched the German conscience during the past few years that we can fully understand the moral decadence into which Germany has fallen. For two years at least the war party has openly preached the national duty of war at any price. In an article on "The Will to War" published in *Der Tag* for October 18, 1912, General Keim said: "With the will to wage war must be conjoined a resolve to take the offensive, since that is the most effective way in which to translate a political will into military deeds. Germany must therefore arm for attack, just as in 1870." Writing of the flood of Chauvinistic literature which has of late years overspread Germany, Professor Otfried Nippold says:

"Hand in hand with this outspoken hostility to foreign countries are conjoined a one-sided exaltation of war and a war mania such as would have been regarded as impossible a few years ago. One can only confess with regret the fact that to-day there is so much irresponsible agitation against other States and nations, and so much frivolous incitement to war. It cannot be doubted that this agitation is part of a deliberate scheme, the object of which is gradually to win the population, and if possible the Government, by any means whatever—even by the distortion of fact and malicious slander—for the programme of the Chauvinists.

"These people not only incite the nation to war, but systematically stimulate the desire for war. War is

pictured not as a possibility that may occur, but as a necessity that must come, and the sooner the better. The quintessence of the teaching of the organizations of Chauvinism, like the Pan-Germanic Federation and the German Defence Association, is always the same: a European war is not merely an eventuality for which we must be prepared, but a necessity at which we should, in the interest of the German nation, rejoice.

"From this dogma it is only a small step to the next maxim of the Chauvinists, which is so dear to the heart of the belligerent political generals—the maxim of the 'war of attack,' or the so-called preventive war. If war has to come, then let it come at the moment most favourable for us. In other words, do not let us wait until a formal cause for war occurs, but let us strike when it best suits us, and above all let us do it soon! There we have the logic of the Chauvinistic system compressed into few words. From the idea of a defensive war for urgent reasons the Chauvinists have advanced to the idea of an offensive war for no reason at all, and they flatter themselves that the German nation has undergone the same transformation. Consciously or unconsciously these people represent barbarism and the mediæval law of brute force as alone deserving of imitation by the German nation. For what else is meant when the German nation is urged to welcome a war of spoliation and advised to violate international law and cast moral considerations to the winds in attaining this end?" *

It was in keeping with this inflammatory policy that the military party, with General Keim at the head, established in January 1913 a new propagandist organization with the inoffensive title "German Defence Association" (*Deutscher Wehrverein*). Lieutenant-General Wrochem explained its object at a meeting held in March, when he said: "A progressive nation like ours needs more territory, and if this cannot be obtained by peaceable means it must be obtained by war. It is the object of the Defence Association to create this sentiment." It was at another meeting of this associa-

* "Der deutsche Chauvinismus."

tion, held in May 1913, that General Keim tried to mobilize the childhood of the nation in the cause of national hatred. "It must be made clear to our German boys, aye, and our girls as well," he said, "that it is their duty to hate the enemies of their Fatherland."

Whether the unparalleled military preparations made by Germany in 1913 were merely a measure of precaution or part of a deliberate war design is a question that may not for a long time be decided satisfactorily. In the Army Bill of that year the Government demanded an immediate increase of 4000 officers, 15,000 non-commissioned officers, and 117,000 rank and file, increasing the peace strength of the army from 544,000 to 661,000, an increase, said one deputy, "such as has never before been known in Germany or the whole world." The money vote—to be met by a levy on capital—needed to cover this addition to the peace strength and the incidental expenditure on buildings, material, &c., amounted to some fifty million pounds.

Without that Bill Germany could not have gone to war this year even had it wished; with it came a fatal inducement to force a quarrel. It may be said that the special war grant, large though it was, could not prove of immediate benefit. This is not the case, however, for it is well known that much of the money—probably the greater part—had been or was being spent long before it had been voted. It was made a grievance against the Government by the parties which still remember the "Conflict Time" of 1862–1866, and have not altogether lost regard for the Constitution and the budget rights of Parliament, that while the War Minister was showing the need for the grant and explaining how the money was to be used, new barracks were already being built, new divisions formed, and vast increases made to munitions, accoutrements, and the like.

It is also known that the assumed domestic embarrassments of Great Britain weighed heavily with the war party, and encouraged it in the fatal habit, which has been indulged in with growing arrogance for many years, of taking cheaply this country's defensive resources

and patriotic spirit. So lately as September 1913 General von Bernhardi wrote in the Berlin *Post* that a war between Germany and England must soon come, and he pointed to the Irish troubles in justification of his belief that in such a contingency Germany might even be able to count on useful allies, passive if not active, in the British camp. On the other hand, the Ultramontane *Germania* wrote on March 8, 1913: "Unless its interest dictates other tactics, the crafty Briton will in the future, as in the past, let the Continental Powers hack each other to pieces in order to be able to exact a rich reward in return for its 'benevolent neutrality.'"

Incidentally the Crown Prince has done his best to encourage the Chauvinist spirit. His ostentatious disapproval of the Government's action over the Morocco settlement in 1911, as shown in the Reichstag by alternate marks of dissent when the Chancellor defended himself and hand-clapping when the Conservatives attacked him, opened up an alarming prospect for the country which he may one day have to rule. In 1913 he further fanned the flames of Chauvinism by his book "Germany under Arms," the publication of which led the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* to write (May 3): "When the Gordian knot is tied God sends Alexander!"

And yet it would be unjustifiable to assume that the whole German nation has unreservedly endorsed this policy of universal aggression and this unholy lust for combat, for it is not true. A large part of the nation, not understanding the meaning of *Weltpolitik*, has been indifferent to it, while of those Germans to whom the phrase conveys definite ideas a very considerable number have opposed it from conviction of its unwisdom and danger. The Liberal party, though hampered by much obscurity of mind and above all the fear of being suspected of unpatriotic motives, has been half-hearted in its opposition, though on the whole it has voted against the Government whenever the question of a "spirited foreign policy" has come up as a direct issue. On the other hand, the Socialist party, with its four million voters, has consistently and vehemently combated *Weltpolitik*

from the beginning. It fought the last General Election on this issue in 1912, and gained strength as the result. "This time," wrote Karl Kautsky in the *Neue Zeit* for January 1913, "the appeal to 'murder-patriotism,' which proved so effective in 1887 and again in 1907, has entirely failed. Never has our party proclaimed its fixed will to oppose all warlike ambitions with all its might more vigorously than last year, and in spite of this our votes have increased by a million and those of the specially 'patriotic' parties have decreased by 300,000."

All such efforts to stem the tendencies which were making for war, however, were foredoomed to failure, for neither the Liberal middle classes nor the Socialist working classes have any influence on the Emperor's *entourage* and Government, and these had already been captured by the military party. The only questions that remained to be decided were when the war should break out and the choice of suitable pretexts.

III. The Big Navy Menace

So far as this country is concerned it is doubtful whether German *Weltpolitik* would have created the distrust and alarm it has, in spite of the indiscreet temper of its advocates, from the Emperor downwards, had Germany's militant ambitions been restricted to its land forces.

In whatever direction we follow the events and tendencies which have brought Germany into conflict with the rest of the world, in so far as this conflict is a direct result of foreign policy, it will be found that Bismarck's policy was the policy of safety and conciliation, and that it is the Emperor's departure from that policy which has caused all the mischief of the past quarter of a century. This holds good equally of the Emperor's scheme of naval expansion. It was foreshadowed at the outset of the new reign, and Bismarck viewed this new course likewise with misgivings, regarding it as a dangerous adventure and as a menace to other

countries. Bismarck's original idea in favouring the creation of a small navy was merely to assert Germany's right to use the sea as against Denmark, and even at the close of his life he said that he would "regard it as an exaggeration of the navy idea to compete with either England or France."

Carlyle,* the panegyrist of Frederick the Great, said of the peace of Hubertusburg, which confirmed Austria's final defeat in the Silesian struggle, that it secured England as mistress of the seas—"not only liberty of the seas but dominion of them; guardianship of liberty for all others whatsoever; dominion of the seas for that wise object." So it continued until our own day, until the descendant of Frederick the Great challenged the verdict of history and the tacit assent of the nations.

When the Emperor came to the throne the recurrent expenditure on the German navy amounted to only two and a half million pounds; in 1912 the same expenditure was twenty-three millions. It would be purposeless to enter into comparative statistics of naval strength, now that all such statistics represent material forces which are fighting out the question of maritime supremacy on ocean and sea in all parts of the world. Other countries, and particularly Great Britain, have similarly made large additions to their navy, and for this the Emperor is chiefly to blame. He it is who has forced upon Europe an exhausting rivalry in naval, not less than in military, armaments and has caused the diversion into wasteful and destructive channels of countless millions of money which, if more wisely used, might have showered untold blessings upon the entire human race. It was of the Emperor's provocative action on the naval question that his third Chancellor, Prince von Hohenlohe, wrote (November 7, 1897): "It is not desirable that the Emperor should disturb things by his impulsive nature. It is to be wished that he were more phlegmatic."

We are able to follow the growth of the German navy

* Would that ardent apologist for the Silesian wars and the partition of Poland have excoriated or exonerated the author of the great world-war of 1914?

in the Emperor's speeches, as we may the entire change which has in course of time come over the Emperor's original design, as at any rate professed. The first claim put forward was singularly modest and almost apologetic. The navy was to be a very small one, so small that it would hurt nobody. Its purpose was said to be "to maintain and strengthen the security of the Fatherland's coasts." There was then no suggestion of a navy that should be a powerful one in war, still less of any ambition to rival England. So far from that, in the early days the Emperor was considerate enough to throw us a crumb of comfort when he proposed at Cowes Regatta (1894) the toast: "May Britannia continue to rule the waves!" That was all Britannia wished to do, leaving Germania to rule the land with her armies if she were so disposed and able, but the Emperor soon showed that his intentions did not square with his words. In 1896 the navy was "still small," but "it is steadily growing and already is respected and feared. It may be hoped that no foe will readily attack us, but if one appears you must fearlessly resist him." A navy for fighting purposes was now openly avowed: "While the navy is specially intended to defend and protect peace, it will also do its duty in war."

Meantime, by means of persistent agitation and propagandism of all kinds, by appeals to patriotism, interest, and even fear, the navy idea had taken hold of the national imagination. The Navy League in particular zealously seconded the Emperor's efforts, and by means of its million members—the great majority no doubt schoolboys and schoolgirls, who join in whole battalions, yet each an enthusiastic pioneer in the home circle—brought conviction to the minds of the taxpayers that Germany needed all the ships the Emperor asked for, and that it was their duty to supply them. Once the nation was won over, as it was completely after a few years of agitation, all talk of a small navy was abandoned. "I shall not rest," he said in 1897, "until I have brought my fleet to the same standard as my army." Sure of his ground, the Emperor now revealed his ulterior inten-

tions in such utterances as " The trident belongs to our hands " (1897) and " Our future lies on the water " (1898); while he spoke of himself as " the admiral of the Atlantic Ocean " (1901).

" The German nation," he said in 1900, " is at one with its Princes and Emperor in the determination to mark further our powerful development by the creation of a great navy," and again in 1902 he told the Reichstag that it would be his " constant duty and care to increase the defensive strength of the German nation by land and water." English critics, who ventured to recall the earlier professions with which their anxiety had been allayed, were now told that what Germany did was no business of theirs. " The German nation," the Emperor said in 1904, " has a right to maintain just such an army and navy as the protection of its interests requires, and no one will venture to prevent it developing these two forces according to its own wish and will." When suggestions of bad faith were made in this country the German Government rejoined indignantly that such a thing was impossible, since its naval scheme was contained in an Act of Parliament and was bound to follow the lines there laid down, ignoring the fact that the original shipbuilding programme, as legalized in 1897, had been modified by new Acts of 1900, 1906, and 1908.

Nor was the Emperor himself quite straightforward. At the very time that he wrote to the late Lord Tweedmouth (1908), protesting that his naval scheme was innocent and inoffensive, that rivalry with Great Britain was not intended, and that we should be making a great mistake if we increased our fleet under that suspicion, he was exhibiting in the Reichstag a series of pictures and diagrams showing the relative strength of the British and German navies with pointed comments designed to make the deputies amenable to the pressure of his astute Naval Minister, Admiral von Tirpitz, who can truly claim that he has been able to obtain the money he wanted far more readily than any War Minister since Moltke's influence disappeared.

It is now some years since the pretence that Germany

wishes for a small navy for sentimental reasons, a navy whose importance should be symbolical rather than material, was abandoned. There are isolated writers, not over-pleased that the Emperor has shown his hand so clearly, who still persist in clinging to the old fiction and protest that the German navy of the future must not be regarded as a menace to this country. Dr. Paul Rohrbach is one of these, and he asserts that "never yet has a German statesman or politician, our Press, or any thinking man in Germany expressed or suggested the idea that we wished to build a navy as strong as the British navy, or even as strong as the fleet which England maintains in its home waters." * It would have been far more creditable had the avowal been candidly made, for then there could have been no suspicion of equivocation, and what the British public has resented almost as much as the German naval menace is the fact that it has been created under protestations of innocent motive and friendly intentions. No one will dispute the authority in Germany of General von Bernhardi, and little reason as Englishmen have to admire this war-at-any-price writer, they can at any rate be grateful for his candid admissions on this point. Bernhardi, scorning ambiguity like the soldier he is, says that from the beginning and all the time the German navy was intended as a threat to this country and that all the talk to the contrary is cant:

"All discerning persons were convinced of the necessity to face and drive back an aggressive rival on the high seas."

"The protection of our commerce and the defence of our shores cannot possibly be the only object of such a fleet, but it, like the land army, is an instrument for carrying out the political ends of the State and supporting its justifiable ambitions."

"There can be no question of such limited objects as protection of commerce and passive coast defence. A few cruisers are enough to protect commerce in times of peace, but in war the only way to safeguard it is to defeat and where possible destroy the hostile fleet. The

* "Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt."

object of our fleet, therefore, is to defeat our possible rivals at sea, and force them to make terms."

"It is an erroneous idea that our fleet exists merely for defence and that it must be built with that end in view. It is intended to serve our political ends, and must therefore be capable of being employed according to the exigencies of the political situation: on the offensive when the political situation demands it, and an attack promises success; on the defensive when we believe that greater advantages can be obtained in that way."

And that he may leave us in no doubt that Germany has England in mind Bernhardi adds:

"This conception of our duty on the sea points directly to the fact that the English fleet must set the standard by which to estimate the necessary size of our own naval preparations. A war with England is probably that which we shall first have to fight out by sea."

As to the Press, sentiments in the same sense might be quoted indefinitely. It is only two years since the authoritative *Hamburger Nachrichten* said: "We must continue to increase our sea-power with special regard to the possibility of war with England." "British naval supremacy is under all circumstances doomed," said the Conservative-Junker *Kreuz-Zeitung* a little earlier.

One is entitled to ask who has been telling the truth and who the reverse all this time—the Emperor, who assured us so long as it served his turn that his fleet was meant not for war but for peace, and has always disclaimed hostility to this country; or Bernhardi and the rest of the naval propagandists, who say frankly that it is meant not for peace but for war, and that it will first be used against us? Whatever the Emperor may have intended, there is no doubt as to how his ambitious project has been understood by the German people in general, whether favourable to naval power or not.

Moreover, for many years no one in Germany has been under the slightest doubt that the naval question has been the great outstanding cause of friction between that country and our own, and for that reason the parties desirous of conciliation have cordially seconded the

efforts made by our Government to bring an end to the policy of naval rivalry.

Meeting Count Paul Metternich, the German Ambassador to this country, in November 1910, for the purpose of discussing the strained relations between the two countries and the possibilities of a better understanding from the naval standpoint, I opened the conversation with a remark to the effect that "trade jealousy was no longer a cause of serious friction, nor was colonial rivalry," when the Ambassador broke in with "I know what you are going to say—it is the navy, and you are right." * All Germany knows this likewise, yet the risk of discord and ill-will has been run deliberately not because the nation as a whole (of that I am absolutely convinced) wished it, but because the Emperor and his Government would not have it otherwise.

When some years ago the Emperor said that he would not rest until he had brought the navy up to "the same standard as the army," a well-known German writer commented: "As our army is incontestably the strongest in the world, this declaration means that our navy should likewise be the most powerful," and he called the idea a "megalomaniac project," "economically absurd," and as bound to create distrust abroad. In this matter the Liberal and Social Democratic parties with their Press

* Although this frank conversation was of a confidential character, I shall not be breaking faith if I say that the impression left on my mind was that the Ambassador was a sincere friend of peace, that he was profoundly anxious about the development of Anglo-German relationships, and that he personally was very desirous to see the end of the futile naval rivalry. I may without impropriety quote from a letter of December 18, 1910, the Ambassador's "hope for a lasting improvement of the relations between our two countries." Certainly he did his best, and his two successors loyally continued his efforts. No one can have read the Anglo-German diplomatic correspondence relating to the outbreak of war without forming the opinion that peace was desired far more earnestly by the late Ambassador of Germany in London than by his Government. It is just to remember the efforts made by these and other German peace-lovers to prevent irremediable alienation between their country and our own.

have in general shown a true grasp of the situation, and that a naval agreement has not been concluded with this country is not due to any want of ardour on their part, since both parties know that the more money is spent on armaments the less is available for social reform.

Deputy Scheidemann said in the Reichstag on March 15, 1910:

"So long as England and Germany continue on strained terms there can be no quiet for Europe. We have uttered our warning against the policy of inflated armaments, but we have not been believed. Now we see the result in increased distrust abroad. The English naval estimates are determined in Germany. Germany and England must come to a more intimate relationship and friendship. Millions think like myself, and are glad that this is said here, but, alas, no one believes us in England. There they say that the German people have no control over war; they know nothing of the game which their rulers are carrying on."

Another deputy, Dr. David, spoke to the same effect on the following day:

"The cardinal question in our foreign policy is the relationship between England and Germany. Upon the solution of this question depends the question whether a world war may be averted. The dangers of the existing tension are becoming ever more menacing. The English naval expenditure is the result of our German big fleet policy. The English Government has seriously proposed the limitation of armaments since 1908, but all the time Germany has refused to consider it"

As late as November 18, 1911, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* also, which has always been a great power in the business world, warned the Government that any increase of the naval programme would be sure to stir up fresh bitterness in England, and added: "A decisive stand must be made in Germany to prevent the prevailing irritation in England from being used as a pretext for another alteration of the Navy Law in the direction of an increase hitherto considered unnecessary. If Germany takes to new construction England is certain to respond

with a double increase of her own. The Liberal Government naturally wishes to avoid such a step, since it requires the money more urgently for social reforms. Moreover, the agitation for new naval armaments which is conducted under the banner of patriotism is the most effective means of making impossible for ever a sensible understanding with England."

The attitude of the Socialist party is reflected by the following extract from a leading article in the *Vorwärts* of July 5, 1912 :

" Germany's unexampled naval armaments more and more endanger the relationships between the German and British nations, so nearly related, because England believes that Germany's abnormal navy can only be intended as a menace to its empire. In spite of all the pacific assurances of German diplomats (though these are discredited by the infamous Anglophobism of our fleet patriots), the relationships between the two countries cannot be improved until Germany enters into a naval agreement with England and curtails its boundless schemes of naval construction."

At a time like the present, when the German nation is in a condition which cannot by any stretch of charity be regarded as morally normal, it is all the more satisfactory to recall the fact that upon this question at least some of the more thoughtful classes of the population, though not entirely free from naval vanities, have throughout recognized that German fleet building is intended as a menace to British maritime supremacy and have refused to support the Government in its wanton policy of provocation. They know, too, and acknowledge, that while a large navy is for Germany a luxury it is for this country a necessity of existence. " England in this matter," writes the essayist Fuchs, already quoted, " is fighting for her existence ; our strength lies in the army."

IV. Peace Emperor or War Emperor ?

But we are told that the Emperor has kept the peace for over twenty-five years, ever since, in fact, he became

Germany's war-lord and so inherited the power to declare war and send out his armies to destroy the armies of other nations. He himself has bored the world with his perpetual professions of his love of peace and his claim to be regarded as the " peace Kaiser," the " peace preserver," and the rest. But is it to be judged a conspicuous virtue in an absolute Sovereign that he keeps the peace ? Other Sovereigns regard it as a self-evident duty, an obligation of common morality. Would it not have been a crime to have disturbed the peace needlessly and heedlessly ? Moreover, is not condemnation implied of the militarism which has made Imperialism possible in Germany when it is claimed as a supreme merit that, although controlling the dogs of war, the Emperor has not let them loose until now ? Such a claim is a reminder that all the time Europe has lived under the shadow of a terrible menace, and that the uncertain temper of a single man has stood between it and the catastrophe which has at last overtaken it.

And, after all, the claim made on the Emperor's behalf is only true with reservations. No individual in modern history has shown an equal capacity for getting on the nerves of the Sovereigns and Governments of Europe. His third and fourth Chancellors in particular had no more fervent wish than that he would, for the sake of peace and tranquillity, keep out of politics and cease to embarrass their efforts to maintain good relations with Germany's neighbours. Is it not the barest fact that he has created an atmosphere and stimulated tendencies which have kept almost the whole world in a fever of anxiety ? In one of his early speeches the Emperor reflected : " So long as mankind suffers from unredeemed sin, so long will there be war and hate, envy and discord, and so long will one man try to get the advantage over another. Moreover, the law that applies to individuals holds good no less for nations." Would that he himself, instead of offering the world this platitude, had done more, even anything at all, to repress the evil propensities which he professed to deplore.

All the talk of " mailed fists " and " shining armour,"

all the warnings to other nations to behave themselves and stand out of Germany's light, all the threats of coming maritime supremacy, all the boasting of his great armies, which should become ever greater, all the sword rattling and flapping of the eagle's wings to which the Emperor has treated us during the last twelve years have been as so much inflammable material fateful in possibilities of disaster. Even more than his acts the Emperor's oratory has kept all Europe on the tenter-hooks of apprehension and distrust. One month we find him posing as a pacifist in the industrial West of Germany and declaring it to be his "chief care to preserve peace for my country." But the very next month he is declaring at Berlin, in the midst of complete European tranquillity: "My glass is raised to the nation in arms. Let our powder be dry, our swords sharpened, our goal fixed, our forces strained, and may the pessimists be confounded!" Is there a Sovereign in all history who has so dinned into the ears of his contemporaries his greatness and omniscience and the terribleness of his wrath? How convinced even his own war-makers at home—who of all others knew him best—were that they were acting in his spirit may be illustrated by a significant fact. When at the opening of the Palace of Peace at The Hague in August 1913 some of the speakers lauded the Emperor's pacific intentions and claimed him as an adherent of the pacifist cause, the Conservative journals in Berlin, the organs of the Junkers and the military party, protested in unison against such a use of his name as discreditable. Far from being a pacifist, they pointed out, he had made vast additions both to the army and navy.

Even for Germany there have been several serious crises during the present reign, when the issue of peace or war has hung in the balance, crises caused by itself for its own purposes, and more than once Germany has only been saved from committing further mischief by the suavity of the countries which it has wantonly provoked or of countries which have gone to the rescue in the determination to prevent a general conflagration.

And even if Germany itself has not before now gone to war it helped to entangle Russia with Japan and Austria with Russia, it egged on Austria against Serbia, and at last it has embroiled all Europe.

If the claim that the Emperor has kept the peace were conceded to the full, such a concession would not mean much. Absolute Sovereigns may keep the peace for different reasons—for reasons of policy and sheer selfishness, as well as motives of goodwill and morality. Frederick the Great sought peace and kept it as soon as he had obtained all he wanted, but he left his neighbours no rest until then. Bismarck saw to it that King William I kept the peace until 1864, but only because Prussia's sword was still at the grinder's ; once sharpened he promptly used it, and did not sheathe it again for seven years, during which he fought three bloody wars. Then he, too, preserved the peace, but only because it was not in Germany's interest to fight again.

Thus no greater credit than the negative credit of doing well because it did not pay to do ill is due to the Emperor for the peace which has fallen to recent years. It has been an armed peace at the best, but such as it has been it has been kept because it was Germany's interest to be quiet until its forces were so strong as to be able when the proper hour struck to take the field with confidence of victory. In a word, Germany has not gone to war because on its theory of statecraft war waged at an inopportune time is one of those blunders which, as Talleyrand said, are worse than crimes. That is why Germany did not go to war against France in 1911, as General von Bernhardi has told us, and why it decided on war with a light heart at the end of July 1914, not believing then that England would have any scruples about a " scrap of paper " and would be so unmodern as to defend its honour by its arms.

Even were it possible to give to the Emperor all the credit he desires for having kept the peace, it would still be impossible to acquit him of responsibility for the present disaster. He knows—no one better than he—that for a decade there has been going on in his country

a veritable crusade of envy, hatred, and malice aimed at the world in general, but specially at the three countries which are now fighting side by side as allies, though the *entente cordiale* was not completed when this unholy crusade began. The Emperor himself gave the word, and great was the multitude of the preachers. Imperialists, Colonial expansionists, Pan-Germanists, Chauvinists of every party and complexion have joined in proclaiming Germany's claim to rule the world and force its culture upon it.

When did the Emperor, who knows everything, who can do everything, and whose will is law, condemn or even, by act or word or sign, discourage these orgies of malice and mischief which were demoralizing the political life of Germany, perverting the very soul of the nation, and endangering the peace of the world? I have read all the accessible public utterances of the Emperor, as contained in many volumes, and nowhere have I found a single word disapproving of the agitations fomenting ill-will, aggression, and greed, whose consummation is the present world war, the responsibility for which Germany is now desperately desirous of relieving its Emperor.

What is the explanation of his silence? Had the war preachers attacked ideals or opinions contrary to the Imperial mind they would have received short shrift. But the contrary has happened. Generals who industriously propagated the gospel of aggressive militarism, while the Emperor was making his soothing protestations of pacific intentions, have remained generals still. Historians who have magnified Germany's mission in the world, and preached the dangerous but quite true doctrine that the logical consequence of *Weltpolitik* as the Emperor conceived it is world empire, and that world empire must be won by force of arms, have been marked out for their Sovereign's special favour. Imperialists of the Pan-German type have even been directly encouraged and used by the Government when their service seemed of advantage. German editors have been sent to prison by the score for the paltry offence of

slighting their Sovereign's sensitive feelings. Never has an editor drawn upon himself Imperial rebuke or frown for having read into the Emperor's Chauvinistic orations ambitions of conquest and designs for setting the world aflame.

On the other hand, the men who have insistently urged the danger of militarism and Chauvinism have by so doing sacrificed popularity and influence, have seen their motives misjudged, their patriotism suspected, and their reputations maligned. Such are many of the foremost members of the Liberal and Socialist parliamentary parties, who have been made to see and to feel that an independent attitude is from a professional and social standpoint bad policy. But these parties were never courtly parties, and the influence of their protests has been altogether disproportionate to their earnestness.

It would be insulting the Emperor's intelligence to suggest that he has not been conscious of the developments of the Imperialistic policy of which he claims the sole authorship or blind to the growing success of the agitations by which leading militarists and publicists have striven to give effect to his ambitions for world power. He may not have endorsed their agitations openly, but he has never dissociated himself from them, and his silence is presumptive of complicity and of his willingness that they should lead to that which was their only possible issue.

What shall be said, in particular, of the Emperor's attitude towards this country? Is it justifiable to believe that he has throughout his whole career intentionally and deliberately played falsely with the British nation, and that all his friendly assurances, his professions of admiration for our army and navy, and his apparent desire to strengthen dynastic ties were insincere, and were simply meant to put us off our guard? The question is one upon which full liberty of judgment must be left to all who have tried to understand the complex character of this remarkable man. Doubtless the Emperor has often exaggerated his feelings of friendliness towards us, but I for one would like to believe that the

exaggeration has been one of temperament rather than of deliberate chicanery. It is only fair to remember that on more than one occasion the *rôle* of apparent Anglophile which he assumed under critical circumstances drew upon him the cordial censure of the ruling classes in his own country. To suppose that all the Emperor's past protestations of a desire for conciliatory relationships were false would be to attribute to him immeasurable obliquity and to credit him with a greater capacity for deceiving a nation than any ruler or statesman before him has possessed, an assumption not very creditable to ourselves, for it cannot be doubted that a considerable section of the British people has always, or spasmodically, received the Emperor's overtures as sincere and well-intended.

Whatever credit, therefore, may be due to the Emperor on this account, so far as the past is concerned, it is nevertheless necessary to add that if he wished for England's friendship he wanted it on his own terms and not on ours, and that to his terms no honourable nation could have assented. We were to fall in with his schemes of Imperialism and military and naval expansion, and to regulate our relationships with other nations in accordance with Germany's interests. The England whose friendship official Germany wanted, and perhaps envied, was an England who at need might be counted to put away all other attachments and loyalties for its sake, who would bind herself not to place obstacles in the way of Germany's designs against other countries, and in fact would agree to watch at the bank door while Germany pilfered the safes inside. As we now know, it was also assumed that, as a price of Germany's friendship, we would be willing to break solemn treaties and condone the assassination of a small nation. In both countries strong bodies of peace-lovers earnestly strove to the last to bring about an understanding between the estranged nations, yet in Germany as here many of these true friends of culture must have foreseen long ago with anxiety that a genuine *entente* hinged upon conditions which on our part could not be fulfilled, though the impossibility of complying

with them was only realized truly when they were brought to the actual test.

General von Bernhardi made this perfectly clear in an article entitled "Our Future," which he wrote in *Die Post* of December 23, 1912. "England," he said, "*must* give us a completely free hand in European affairs, and acquiesce in advance in any extension of Germany's power on the Continent which may be effected either through a Central European Federation or a war with France. It *must* not seek to harass us diplomatically in the development of our colonial policy, so far as this is not at England's cost. It *must* agree to any change in the ownership of North African territories in favour of Italy and Germany. It *must* pledge itself not to impede Austria in asserting its interests in the Balkans, not to get in the way of Germany's economic endeavours in Near Asia, and not to oppose the expansion of Germany's naval power and the acquisition of coaling stations by the German Empire."

Nothing could better illustrate Germany's arrogant attitude towards other nations in general than this insolent catalogue of imperatives.

In an essay on "International Law," published many years ago, Treitschke wrote: "That State which will not be untrue to itself must possess an acute sense of honour." To these words of a German whose ideas of national probity were so unhappily obscured by partisanship Great Britain appeals to-day. For the resentment which is now shown in Germany towards this country is in the main the resentment of people who, however honourable they may be in private life, refuse to recognize that the ethical standards which they would accept as binding upon them in ordinary civil concerns have equal relevance to the relations between nations. If English merchants twenty-four hours before the war broke out had repudiated their debts to Germany, the united voice of that country and of all others calling themselves civilized would have branded their conduct as dishonourable. Because the British nation collectively refused to break a solemn

engagement with Belgium relating not to merchandise but to national independence and the sanctity of human life and liberty, it is deemed by perverse logic to be " a traitor to the Teutonic race," as though the Teutonic race were assumed to be identified with dishonesty and immorality!

National egoism has perpetrated many strange extravagances in the past, but the egoism which expects that acts of perfidy and crime shall be perpetrated in the name of friendship is unique. We are even entitled to doubt whether a friendship ratified by such acts would have been sacred to Germany itself. General von Bernhardi wrote several years ago: " English attempts at a *rapprochement* must not blind us to the real situation. We may at most use them to delay the necessary and inevitable war until we may fairly imagine we have some prospect of success." The conclusion to be drawn from this candid avowal of deceit is that we were not intended to have Germany's good-will for long, even if we paid the full price. What was required of us was that we should conciliate a country which threatened us by sacrificing countries which did not, with the prospect of being attacked all the same whenever the conditions were favourable.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEW IMPERIALISM

I. The Earlier Colonial Movement

The German colonial movement of the present day is altogether different from that of thirty years ago, when the colonial spirit first took hold of modern Germany. It was then a strictly commercial movement; to-day it is an Imperialistic movement, representing *Weltpolitik* in its most aggressive form. The germinal idea behind the Imperialistic movement may perhaps be found in Hegel's teaching that there is only room in the world for one dominant Power at once, and that in his time the turn of the Germanic race had come. Hegel, however, meant by the Germanic race much more than the nation ruled by the German Emperor to-day, and it is doubtful whether he would have endorsed the Emperor's hope, "May the German Fatherland be destined to become as commanding as was once the Roman world empire!"

It is desirable to trace the innocent origin of this dangerous bid for universal dominion. Lord Odo Russell related in 1873 that Bismarck had confided to him his opinion that colonies would be for Germany a "source of weakness." When Bismarck took up the colonial movement ten years later he did it without enthusiasm, not being convinced of its urgent necessity, and conscious that only tropical countries remained unappropriated. With such possessions, however, he was satisfied, and he never dreamed of coveting the vineyards of neighbours. Moreover, he began the movement on strictly business principles. He had far more commercial acumen than the majority of the pioneer adventurers at whose request

he proclaimed the first German protectorates in Africa in 1884 and 1885, for while they expected that the colonies should at once pay their way, he foresaw that before there could be a prospect of satisfactory returns there must be a large investment of capital both by the State and private enterprise. The idea of colonizing with Germans hardly occurred to him; his idea was that of plantation and trading settlements worked with native labour, with German planters and merchants at the head, and with as few German officials as possible; and to the last he kept the colonial movement on these sober and humdrum lines. So late as 1889 he declared that he was still "no colony man," and said:

"I have not yet abandoned my earlier opposition to colonies such as most of the colonies of the past century were, colonies on the French system—a system which began with the acquisition of a tract of land, then endeavoured to attract emigrants to it, and set up officials and garrisons. Such colonies may be useful for other countries, but for us the system is not practicable. I am convinced that colonial projects cannot be created artificially."

The scruples which caused Bismarck to walk warily on the colonial path do not influence the colonial party to-day. One of Bismarck's principal objections to colonization of any kind was a fear that it might bring Germany into conflict with the older empires. The new Imperialists are deterred by no such consideration. Here, as in the wider sphere of *Weltpolitik* generally, the traditional spirit of envy has asserted itself in a virulent form. Was it tolerable that England should be mistress of one quarter of the globe, and that France, with a stagnant, if not a decreasing, population, should control vast regions which it was unable to people, while Germany, with a population half again as large as either of these countries and so prolific that its yearly increase far exceeded that of both countries together, should have to be content with a few tropical territories wholly unsuited for settlement by whites and even of questionable economic value?

The more Germans brooded over this question the more impatient they became with a distribution of colonial empire which seemed to take so little account of their present and prospective needs.

It must be conceded in fairness that on this question the Germans have, if not a grievance, at least a strong claim to consideration. In the old days, when Germans had almost to apologize for their existence, the invidiousness of their position was not felt. When the German tribes had been cemented into a powerful empire and this empire was able to assert a leading place amongst the Great Powers, it was justly regarded as a humiliation that its emigrant population should be compelled to settle under the protection of foreign flags in alien countries, there to lose the language, customs, institutions, and even sentiment of the homeland. It may be estimated that the population lost to Germanism during the past forty years owing to this cause has hardly been less than three millions, exclusive of their descendants born abroad.

While, however, one may sympathize entirely with the German way of looking at the emigration question and recognize the reasonableness of Germany's wish for suitable outlets for its surplus population, there is a right as well as a wrong way of pressing this question upon those able to assist Germany's aims, and it is unfortunate that the wrong way has been taken. It is the tragedy of Germany's position that it came upon the scene of empire and colonization too late to share in the rich territories which aforetime simply awaited the first prospectors who should come and peg out their claims. But for that tragedy none of the great colonizing Powers are in the least responsible. They could not have anticipated the day when Germany would become a united nation and an empire, and had they been able they could not have been expected to stand by until Germany was qualified to join in the race for empire on equal terms.

In his poem "The Division of the Earth" Schiller makes Zeus ask the poet, "Where wast thou when the world was divided out?"* for the poet alone had omitted

* "Wo war'st Du denn als man die Welt geteilet?"

to claim his share. But it was not merely preoccupation in idealistic pursuits that prevented the German peoples from colonizing. They can blame only themselves that for generations they persisted in internecine strife and resisted every movement in the direction of national unity. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, and again in the middle of that century, the German nation might have had the unity which was achieved on different lines after the Franco-Prussian war. It was the Princes far more than the peoples who kept the States apart, and if the nation has suffered in consequence it would do well to place the responsibility in the right quarter. Even since 1871 there was ample time and opportunity to colonize before Bismarck took the first step, but nothing was done. Germany even looked on while the Congo region was appropriated, and when France turned its attention to Morocco, so lately the cynosure of envious eyes, it was on the direct advice of Bismarck, given, however, from no motive of good-will, but from a belief that the best way to keep the French quiet and make them harmless was to get them involved in Imperialistic enterprises. It was Bismarck also who directed the attention of Italy to Tripoli, and who, when Great Britain went to Egypt, encouraged it to stay there.* That Bismarck himself was then and later " no colony man " may be Germany's misfortune, but it is not the fault of the countries whose Sovereigns and statesmen were more far-sighted.

The Germans would also do well to reflect that the greater empires of the present day, whose roots lie far in the past—the British, French, and Dutch—have been created by democratic nations, who long ago put away from them the retarding doctrine of absolute right and have insisted on managing their own affairs. Does it altogether lie in the blood, or is it not in part a

* Prince Bismarck once spoke in the same sense to myself. Discussing the Egyptian question with him at a time when Great Britain still regarded itself as a quarterly tenant in Egypt, a word of mine to the effect that " we are in Egypt and we cannot get out again " drew from him the quick rejoinder, " Why should you ? "

consequence of political education that the Anglo-Saxon race has transplanted the principles of free self-government to every quarter of the globe, and that these principles thrive wherever they are tried, while Germany has established no white community upon its system of absolutism, which has failed even at home? A Germany reorganized, modernized, and unified on the lines desired by the ardent democrats of a hundred or even sixty years ago might have so gained in political intelligence and moral power as to have been able to claim and wisely develop all the empire needed by its population for centuries to come. Here, again, the Germans must take responsibility for their own mistakes and short-sightedness.

Where Germany to-day errs, and sets obstacles in its own way, is in claiming to step in the place of other nations which have been doing the pioneer work of civilization for centuries, while it was drowsing its life away in dreams, or wasting its strength in futile domestic quarrels. It wishes to fall without effort into the soft places of the earth, forgetting that these soft places have been made so by hardy and adventurous peoples who never waited for others to do for them the stern work of subduing nature and conquering savagery by civilization, but did it themselves while Germany looked on.

This eagerness to reap where others have sown is well illustrated by the audacious plea put forward by the leading Conservative organ in Berlin, *Die Post*, while the Morocco negotiations were in progress in 1911. "France," it said, "has North Africa, Britain dominates South Africa, and Germany must get Central Africa. We must strike now while the iron is hot. Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey should be given an immediate opportunity to prove their word that Britain does not oppose Germany's expansion. Perhaps it may eventually be possible to induce England to cede Rhodesia and France the remainder of the mutilated Congo. If we in the meantime secure the Portuguese possessions a mighty German Empire in Central Africa would then be assured."

What Germany will not learn is that the affairs of the world were never managed in this way.

II. Colonization by Spoliation

When Germany did not get the colonies it wanted for the mere asking, it resorted to threats. But no nation conscious of dignity and strength allows itself to be bullied, and the repeated campaigns of menace and malice which have been directed against Great Britain in particular have assuredly hindered rather than helped Germany in its endeavour to acquire territory with our aid. Now it goes further, and declares that as fair means have failed force shall be applied. Colonies are no longer to be asked for, they are to be taken.

Treitschke wrote many years ago that "nowhere in the world do fools talk so much about Chauvinism as in Germany, but nowhere else is there so little Chauvinism." That may have been true at one time; that it is no longer true to-day is one of the results of Treitschke's own teaching. It was his hope that Germany would wage another successful war and that its reward would be the acquisition of colonies. Brutally frank on this as on other questions, his disciple Bernhardi openly advocates the policy of expansion by war and spoliation. He writes in his book "Germany and the Next War":

"We did not enter the circle of Powers whose decisions carried weight in politics until late, when the partition of the globe was long concluded. All which other nations attained in centuries of natural development—political union, colonial possessions, naval power, international trade—was denied to our nation until quite recently. What we now wish to acquire must be fought for and won against a superior force of hostile interests and Powers.

"We have fought in the last great wars for our national union and our position among the Powers of Europe; we now must decide whether we wish to develop into and maintain a world empire. . . .

"If a young people cannot win colonies from uncivilized nations, and yet the State wishes to retain the surplus population which the mother country can no

longer feed, the only course left is to acquire the necessary territory by war." "Then it is not the possessor but the victor who has the right. . . . Might is the supreme right, and the dispute as to what is right is decided by the arbitrament of war."

This writer has even sketched out a plan by which Germany's Imperial position is to be obtained. First France is to be "so completely crushed that she can never again come across our path." Germany is to strengthen the attachment of its present political allies by supporting Austria in a policy of further annexation in the Balkans, and Italy in relieving France of Tunis, while Turkey is to be re-established and kept secure in order that it may harass England. Then, when the ground has been so prepared, a combination of Central European States, with Germany at the head, is to be formed against Britain and the British Empire, whose downfall and disintegration will be only a matter of time.

This policy of greed and robbery was preached long before by the Pan-Germanist League. The ostensible objects of this organization are the strengthening of Germanism in the distinctively Germanist centres and the ultimate drawing into an integral union of the Germanic peoples in Europe. The fact that such a union constitutes a direct menace to the liberties and independence of neighbouring States, particularly Holland, Switzerland, and Luxemburg, has not drawn upon it any word or sign of protest from a Government so solicitous for the integrity of Austria that it advocated the castigation of Serbia for a similar agitation. For some years, however, the Pan-Germanist party has advocated a programme of universal Chauvinism. It has preached the destruction of Russia, the disintegration of the British Empire, and even the forcible dismemberment of Germany's faithful ally, Austria-Hungary, in the interest of a Pan-Germanist Empire which should be able to overrule Europe. In a pamphlet published at the time of the last Morocco conference the president of this organization, which has branches in every German town of importance, wrote :

"England must not be left in any uncertainty that German patience has its limits, and that this patience will assuredly be exhausted if England tries to prevent the acquisition by our Fatherland of such a colony in Morocco as the future of the nation requires. Moreover, if France, blind to its true and permanent interests, allows itself to be used for English ends, it may be quite sure that the German Empire will fall on it first if need be. Those who help us to acquire in Morocco a colony for our surplus population will create the surest guarantee that Germany will not in the immediate future involve the world in an aggressive war."*

Even more fantastic is the Pan-Germanism of the renegade Anglo-Saxon, Herr Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who likewise dreams of a great Germanic Empire, but tells us that he means by the German peoples "all the various populations of modern Europe which appear in history as Celts, Germans, and Slavs, and from whom, mostly in inexplicable confusion, the peoples of modern Europe are sprung."

Half a century ago the unblushing incitements to aggression and territorial spoliation which are to-day the commonplaces of political controversy would have stamped their authors at once as mentally unbalanced or morally perverse. Relating once how before the Danish war of 1864 he tried to rouse the Prussian Council of State to a more Chauvinistic spirit, Bismarck said: "I represented to the King that all his predecessors, with the exception of his late brother, had added something to the realm: did he intend to keep to that? To judge by their astonished looks they clearly thought I had been lunching too well." To-day such predatory sentiments are the hall-mark of patriotism.

The avowal of a determination to acquire empire by appeal to arms is by no means confined to military writers and political essayists; it is a common theme of journalistic discussion. Thus the commercial *Leipziger Tageblatt* wrote quite recently: "Germany does not yet possess the colonies which it must have. Our

* "Marokko."

development requires recognition. Germany is not an institution for the preservation of decadent States"; and the *Deutsche Welt* said even more pointedly: "In the universal struggle for a place in the sun the hope of acquiring territory by peaceful means has no prospect of success."

A well-known Pan-Germanist leader, Baron von Vietinghoff-Scheel, said at a congress of the party at Erfurt in September 1912: "Our boundaries are too narrow. We must be land-hungry, we must acquire new territories for settlement, or we shall be a decadent people, a stunted race. When we are accused of lust of war and spoliation we must think of our nation and the future of our children. If the German people fears war it will have seen its prime." General Keim said at the same congress: "The way to Germany's unity and power was not paved with inkpots, printers' ink, and parliamentary resolutions, but blood, wounds, and deeds of warfare, and States can only be maintained by the same measures by which they were created."

That this violent agitation, with its irresponsible appeals to war, has not been taken lightly in Germany may be judged by the following extract from an article by Herr Karl Leuthner in the *Neue Rundschau* of January 1913:

"The real policy of our Pan-Germans has nothing in common with the opinions of Bismarck. The fear of coalitions robbed him of sleep. He wished for a policy by which Germany should declare itself as satisfied and peace-loving. What would he have said to the extravagances of the Pan-Germans, to the literature of the Navy League, and of Generals Keim and Bernhardi, who count on the possibility of a war by land and water in which Germany would have to fight against France, Russia, England, and possibly against Belgium and Denmark, while at the most we should have at our side Austria-Hungary in the south?

"But the sabre-rattling immaturity of our literary officers is excelled by the speculations of the learned preachers of Imperialism. For the soldier war is 'a

moral duty.' The notion is, indeed, just as valuable as the leading motive of State policy as its antithesis the peace idea of the pacifists, but it springs from the professional narrowness of the military, and for that reason it is at least psychologically comprehensible. What shall be said, however, when a man like Rohrbach offers to Germany the choice between 'renunciation and hazard,' and advances as the reward of such 'hazard' so much latitude for Germany that it shall become a determining factor in the entire culture of the future, here and across the ocean?

"How naively and how much less magniloquently Bismarck thought of war! The acquisition of Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover, Hesse-Nassau, and Alsace-Lorraine, the creation of the North German Confederation, and the establishment of the German Empire appeared to him worth the sacrifice involved; but one may well doubt whether the 'ethical duty of war,' the 'manliness of fighting,' and the hope of becoming a 'determining factor in the future of world culture' would have been worth it, and conclude that he would have been as little able as we to associate any clear conceptions with these words.

"Nevertheless, these words are only the abstract expressions of the obscure amalgam of feelings and ideas which constitutes the intellectual world of our Pan-Germans and Great Germans. Bismarck disdainfully refused to approach international disputes from the standpoint of Göttingen students' etiquette and the private duelling club, and that is just the standpoint of those who to-day appeal to his name. Student elations, mixed with the refuse of Nietzsche's thought and the forceful phrases of Imperialism, form the mental stock-in-trade of the German 'politicians of action'—for it must be action at any price. Never has anything more alien to reality passed as a political movement in a great nation than the Imperialism of the Pan-Germanist complexion, and great is the injury which it has done to German prestige abroad, by giving countenance to the lingering calumny of German policy.'.

Let us be under no illusion as to the ultimate object of German envy and aggression. It is England and the Empire built by the British peoples. "Germany's wants could easily be satisfied out of the excessive abundance of England's possessions," writes Colonel H. Frobenius in his recent book "The German Empire's Hour of Destiny." Even a relatively moderate man like Professor Hans Delbrück has stated that Germany can only expand, but must expand, at the expense of England, France, or Russia, or of them all, while Treitschke declared that it was his ardent wish to see this country humbled to the dust and its world-wide dominion resolved into its original parts.

Looking back upon their intercourse with Germany in the days of peace, there must be many Englishmen who are able to recall evidences even in normal minds of an open or secret disposition to regard the British Empire as fair game for some future trial of strength which should oust England from its place amongst the nations and lead to the division of its dominions as the lawful spoil of warfare. A few years ago an educated German in high official position, a man of very sane views on other questions, one who both knew this country well and was friendlily disposed to us, ended a conversation on the improvement of Anglo-German relationships with the words: "But you do not really suppose in England, do you, that you will always be allowed to keep all those colonies, forming so large a part of the world's surface?" My reply that we did not "keep" the colonies, but that they were linked to the Mother Country as members of a family to their parent, and that naught but the Empire's destruction would "break that proud union," carried no conviction.

If there had been any doubt in the past of Germany's envy of the British Empire and its greed of expansion at our expense, that doubt will have been removed from the minds of even the most credulous by the unashamed confessions of covetousness and brigandage which have been made since the outbreak of the war, not merely by leading German newspapers, but by responsible public

men. That these utterances have been spoken under stress of hatred and passion adds rather than detracts from their sincerity, for if truth is found in the wine-cup it is found still more in the voice of anger. When the ordinary courtesies, restraints, and conventions of intercourse are put aside men are apt to speak as they really think, and though I, for one, do not rate the German capacity for permanent hatred very high, there can be little doubt that the recent revelations of covetousness and greed have been genuine. Their effect may not be pleasant to our feelings, but it is an immense advantage to know the truth, for it will remind us of the spirit which will need to be reckoned with in future years, and in any case to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

On Germany's part, then, the present war is one for territorial conquest. The Berlin Government made that clear before hostilities began, for the intention to appropriate at least the colonies of France was frankly admitted by the German Imperial Chancellor, when pointedly challenged by the British Ambassador, while Belgium was only promised its independence on condition of its violating its obligations to other Powers under the treaty of neutrality of 1839 and virtually becoming Germany's ally against France. Directly Great Britain let it be known that it would not break its pledge to Belgium and the rest of the States which are parties to that treaty, and would fight with honour rather than enjoy tranquillity with dishonour, German designs were at once shown in their true colours.

The German Secretary for the Colonies, Dr. Solf, declared in September 1914: "Our worst enemies are the English. Against our Continental enemies we fight for victory. Against England we fight for booty. That booty must be in proportion to the enormous sacrifices which our people now endure." Professor Ostwald, of Berlin University, has said: "In this war the Germans are defending European culture. In particular, the last remnant of barbarism, namely, England's claim to world supremacy, must be destroyed. Science combined with organization makes us terrible to our opponents, and

ensures a German future to Europe. No German world supremacy will take the place of the English world supremacy, but there will be a European confederation under the organizing leadership of Germany."

Herr Maximilian Harden, one of the ablest, if most vituperative, of German journalists and a man with a large following in the educated and semi-educated classes, has said still more recently:

"Let us drop our miserable attempts to excuse Germany's action. Let us have done with paltry abuse of the enemy. Not against our will, and as a nation taken by surprise, did we hurl ourselves into this gigantic venture. We willed it: we had to will it. We do not stand before the judgment-seat of Europe; we acknowledge no such jurisdiction. Our might shall create a new law in Europe. It is Germany that strikes. When it has conquered new domains for its genius then the priesthoods of all the gods will praise the great war.

"Germany is not making this war to punish sinners, or to free oppressed peoples, and then to rust in the consciousness of disinterested magnanimity. It sets out from the immovable conviction that its achievements entitle it to demand more elbow-room on earth and wider outlets for activity. Spain and the Netherlands, France and England have seized, possessed, and colonized great stretches of the most fertile soil in the world. Now Germany's hour has struck, and it must take its place as the leading Power. Any peace which did not secure it the first position would be no reward for its efforts."

The *Cologne Gazette*, the traditional mouthpiece of the German Government, wrote soon after the opening of the war:

"In ever-increasing degree during these past few weeks the conviction has taken root with us that our German mission is none other than to free the universe from English world supremacy and English world oppression, which has become a nightmare for us all. With our other foes we shall, when the hour is at hand, be able to come to terms, but never with England so

long as it stands for what it stood before the war—the disturber of the peace and the world incendiary. Therefore we preach war against England with more right than England preaches war against German militarism. We preach war against the England which would enslave the globe, and we will not conclude peace until we can resheathe the sword which was forced into our hand in the full consciousness that the world is guaranteed calm and peace from England for decades to come."

In face of such testimony—and it might be multiplied indefinitely—it will be useless henceforth for the saner representatives of German Imperialism to pretend that Germany does not covet British territory, but only desires to acquire lands for which other nations have no use. The Germany for which the *Cologne Gazette* speaks is the official and for the present the dominant Germany—a Germany of envy and greed, of arrogance and haughty ambition, created by the Emperor's policy of aggressive Imperialism. Just as truly, however, is the England which that Germany hates and wishes to undo a fictitious tyrant made after its own image and likeness and existing nowhere else save in an imagination distorted by misrepresentation and convulsed by passion. Out of that Germany no one has ever seen it.

It is strange that the world oppression laid to the charge of Great Britain never troubles the Empire's races and tribes, most of whom enjoy more liberty than the Germans ever knew or have at present any hope of knowing. Treitschke, who knew better, and a host of uninformed imitators, taking their cue from him, preached the same absurdities. But it is not British "tyranny," British "oppression," and British "greed" that really trouble these high-minded men, but rather the grandeur of the British dominion and its unique place in civilization, and chagrin that owing to folly and short-sightedness Germany in the past chose to remain outside the banqueting-hall when the other States and nations sat down at the feast of empire.

Germans know at heart that no noble impulse is behind their ambitions. When in all its history did

Germany or Prussia show the slightest concern for liberty, justice, or any of the things that make up the good government and happiness of nations? When has either said an honest, unselfish word or struck a manly blow in the cause of small nations, of the weak against the strong, or in defence of the doctrine of right against force? In this hour Germany stands condemned by the whole world as the tyrant of three small States—of Serbia, against whose independence it plotted with Austria; Luxemburg, whose frontiers it invaded wantonly under threat of reprisals; and Belgium, which it has desolated and crushed to the dust; and although this is at present the extent of its aggression, there is not one of the other minor States of Europe that trusts either the German spirit or the German word.

Be the historical and political justifications what they may, is it not a fact that the German Empire itself was conceived in fraud and born in violence, since the forged Ems telegram brought on the French war and the French war consummated German unity? That Prussia, out of whose loins the Empire sprang, has grown step by step by force, aggression, and spoliation is witnessed by the story of Silesia, the Polish provinces, Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover, and Hesse-Nassau, all of which have been appropriated against the will of their peoples during the last hundred and fifty years? Finally, is it not the confession and the boast of Germany to-day, the theme of academic harangue, the text of a whole library of Chauvinist literature, written not in the heat of battle but in the quieter days which long preceded the present storm, that sooner or later, given only a favourable opportunity, Germany will create an empire as large as the British by the traditional method of conquest and annexation?

No empire of modern or ancient times was built up entirely by means which the pacifist would approve, and the British Empire truly is no exception to the rule. It is the creation as much of chance as of design; unfair means as well as fair have been used by many of the pioneers and founders who added their rounds to

the great structure; in its name many things have been done which to-day we should do differently, many which to-day we should not do at all. But if wrong has at times been done to subject races, justice and mercy have atoned a thousandfold for all their rue. The Empire has proved the greatest power in the service of progress and humanity ever known in the history of the world; it has put civilization in the place of barbarism, law in the place of lawlessness, kindness in the place of cruelty, fullness in the place of emptiness, plenty in the place of poverty, and over vast continents and boundless seas it has proclaimed the *Pax Britannica*—the Great Peace. Honour to the men who, with cleanest means or other, have made this wonderful dominion, which is yet not ours, but the possession of all mankind! Gratitude for all their sacrifice! Naught that they did was done for self, but all for England. We will not throw stones.

A great empire to be enduring must have a great soul in it and behind it. Force alone will neither make nor keep it, and still less will the base impulses which lie at the root of most unreasoning ambitions. Germany talks more about culture than all the rest of the world together. The world listens unconvinced and answers that the word can have no honest meaning on German lips or in German life so long as it continues to indulge the spirit of greed and envy, of hatred and malice, to the hurt of a nation whose only wish is to be left alone. That is a spirit that Germany will have to root out of its politics, its books, its newspapers, its very soul, if it is ever to become again an associate with which other nations will be glad to work in the cause of civilization.

A campaign of hatred is being directed in Germany against this country at the present time. It is impossible at the moment to estimate the extent and reality of this hatred or to determine with any degree of accuracy where it begins and where it ends. The German ruling classes have never loved Great Britain for the sufficient reason that this country stands for a system of government which, if introduced in Germany, would

mean the speedy downfall of their ascendancy, and of late years because it has blocked the way to their policy of indiscriminate aggression in foreign affairs. Such traditional unfriendliness has simply been accentuated by the war. There can be little doubt, however, that the attitude taken by this country on the Belgian treaty question has aroused a vast amount of hostility which hitherto had smouldered, and has turned into positive ill-feeling sentiments which before were merely those of instinctive and unreasoning antipathy. Amongst the educated and commercial classes out of sympathy with the modern Chauvinistic movements there are unquestionably many persons who have remained cool and sane in the midst of widespread national dementia, but it is probable that the only large body of Germans which has not been carried away as a class by the late flood of anger is the working class, which knows too well that liberty comes from the West to be willing to join indiscriminately in the vilification of a nation whose political institutions have been its envy, hope, and inspiration for over a generation.

The fact that the working classes have embraced the national cause and thrown themselves whole-heartedly into the prosecution of the war does not imply that they endorse the policy or diplomacy which led to it, much less that they accept the puerile pretence of official Germany that England wanted the war. This was made perfectly clear by the Socialist party in the Reichstag, a party representing over four millions of electors, when at the beginning of August it declared that in voting supplies it dissociated itself entirely from the Government's foreign policy, and hinted that this policy had brought about the war.

III. German Theories of Colonization

But, further, before Germany, for its part, is justified in boasting of a colonizing mission, it owes it as a duty both to itself and the races it is ambitious to govern that it should learn how to colonize by going to school with

peoples capable of teaching it. The lesson will never be learnt by intuition or from doctrinaire historians and captious politicians whose sole idea of empire is the mere acquisition, by any means whatever, of territory, with total disregard of what shall come after. The dominant German motive of colonization is national and above all personal advantage. No other idea, for example, occurs to the mind of so able, but ill-informed, a writer as General von Bernhardi, who, proceeding from assumptions natural to the German military mind, states as a matter of common knowledge :

" All the colonies which are directly subject to English rule are primarily exploited in the interest of English industries and English capital. The work of civilization which England undeniably has carried out among them has always been subordinated to this idea ; she has never justified her sovereignty by training up a free and independent population and by transmitting to the subject peoples the blessings of an independent culture of their own."

How utterly unable the average German colonial politician is to conceive of colonies unless expressed in terms of " blood and iron " may be illustrated by the almost universal German miscalculation that directly this country became involved in a European war not merely India, but the self-governing commonwealths, would hasten to cut the painter. The Vienna historian, Herr Theodor von Sosnosky, wrote early in the war :

" The security of the colonies rests on just as flimsy a foundation as the Mother Country. India is held by an army of about one soldier to every 4000 inhabitants. The most valuable British colonies, such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ceylon, and South Africa, have practically no garrisons at all. They only remain loyal to the Motherland by the grace of the colonials' good-will, and could not be prevented from securing their independence if they wanted it. We see that the supremacy of the apparently so mighty British world empire rests almost as much on feet of clay as the Russian Colossus."

The *Cologne Gazette* also wrote about the same time :

"When the colonies, especially India, get sick and tired of British mastery, the day will not be far off when the globe-girdling Great Britain will crumple into an island Empire, which may justly be called Little Britain."

Such utterances are more pathetic than amusing, for they reveal the utter inability of the German mind to conceive of a colonial and civilizing mission being carried out in such a spirit of benevolence, seriousness, and responsibility as to win the attachment and gratitude of the imperial races. At the time the foregoing words appeared the sons of Britain were hastening from every part of the globe to the succour of the Motherland—Indian troops, headed by the native princes, had already landed in France by the ten thousand, and the pick of the manhood of Canada and Australia was speeding across the ocean to the old homeland, which draws it always, but never so strongly as in the hour of peril and need. These things were "given to them for an ensample," but the Germans could not even then understand. How could a people whose political education is only beginning, which has not yet emerged from the leading-strings of patriarchalism, and which lives under the oppressive shadow of feudalism and absolutism, understand the British Empire or the free institutions which strengthen the natural loyalty of the self-governing dominions to the parent country?

There are exceptions, of course, and it is fair to say that German travellers and colonial officials who have seen for themselves what British colonization and empire mean, and have witnessed the success of British colonial enterprise all over the world, do their best to disabuse the German mind of its misconception both of the colonial idea and of British colonization in particular. One such authority, Dr. Paul Rohrbach, an ex-colonial governor, has in this respect written with creditable candour, and the following passage from one of his latest books may be quoted as the best possible answer to the commoner slanders propagated by his misinformed countrymen:

"No reproach is oftener made against the English than that of hypocrisy. It is said to be hypocrisy when the

Englishman, in bringing new territories into the sphere of English influence, regards such a proceeding as identical with the spread of civilization and proclaims Anglo-Saxon culture as the most perfect form of human culture in the world. That it is the most perfect the other great civilized nations will dispute, but who can deny that it represents the mightiest, most self-contained, and most efficient type ever realized by a national spirit since the time of the Roman Empire? What other achievement can be compared with the political and cultural influence of the English nation on the rest of mankind? The British Empire, as the creation of the English national spirit and the agent and disseminator of this spirit in the world, is something so great that it is impossible to speak of it otherwise than with the highest admiration."*

And how has this imposing achievement of British Imperialism been realized? Not by force of arms, as Dr. Rohrbach admits, but by unselfish devotion to the inspiring idea of a national mission, by boundless material sacrifice, by unwearied civilizing work, by school and university and missionary effort, undertaken by men and women who may indeed have had England and the fame and glory of England at the back of their minds, yet who made their first aim the welfare of mankind. Dr. Rohrbach shall himself compare the ideals of the two countries, for his testimony cannot be prejudiced:

"We Germans must confess that our discernment, our feeling of responsibility, and our readiness to make personal sacrifices in the service of a national mission in the world are but little developed and that their moral and material value is minimal as compared with what is done by England." †

It is because Germans in general lack the true colonizing, the true Imperial spirit that they cannot yet successfully colonize, nor hope for generations to qualify themselves to become a genuinely Imperial people. Germany's emigrants to lands outside German influence make admirable citizens wherever they go, but the

* "Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt." † *Ibid.*

German colonist so-called is not a great success even in his own empire. Dr. Rohrbach has said of him :

"Those who know our colonies will not make the mistake of believing that the German colonist of to-day is an altogether admirable person. He is still to a large extent ill-balanced and covetously arrogant, he is inclined to put his own interest in the foreground, and he expects that the Government, the Fatherland, the Reichstag, and the Press shall all sacrifice themselves for the special welfare of a few thousand settlers." *

Nor has German colonial administration so far proved a great success, and it is again Dr. Rohrbach who, speaking from observation, has emphasized the principal reason. "It is an old weakness of the German system of government," he says, "that it finds it so difficult to place confidence in the political capacity and loyalty of the nation. The mistake made by our colonial administration is the unconscious antagonism of the German bureaucracy to any fundamental departure on questions of principle." Put in plain English, this means that the autocratic system of government which has worked so ill at home has been transplanted bodily to the colonies, and has failed there as here. It was a danger foreseen by Bismarck when he deprecated overloading the colonies with officials, but his warning was not heeded.

In its first stages the record of colonial administration was a dreary story of blundering incapacity and cruelty, and few indeed were the early administrators who, like Wissmann, returned, in Bismarck's phrase, "with a white waistcoat." Dr. Bernhard Dernburg cleansed the Augean stable as far as was humanly practicable, and since he was at the Colonial Office—which he left not, indeed, because he wished to go, but because he knew by unfailing instinct when it was time to go, for the Junkers had their knives in him from the beginning—matters have been much better, though in some of the colonies still far from satisfactory. Of Cameroon, for example, Dr. Rohrbach wrote in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*

* "Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt."

in May 1913 : " It is hard to say the words, but thirty years after the proclamation of a German protectorate over Cameroon the hygienic conditions amongst the natives are in a large part of the colony worse than they were aforetime, and the population decreases instead of increasing." The present Colonial Secretary, Dr. Solf, who is now " out for booty," told the Chamber of Commerce of South Cameroon on returning from a tour of the colony : " It is a sad spectacle to see how the villages are depopulated of men. Family life is being ruined ; parents, husband and wife, and children are separated "—all in the interests of that exploitation which to the German planter is the be-all and end-all of colonization and which the Government tolerates.

More lately (March 7, 1914) Herr Erzberger, a Ministerialist, speaking in the Reichstag, passed still severer condemnation on certain specified abuses of colonial life and administration, including the recognized system of forced labour, the frauds perpetrated on the natives, and the ill-treatment of labourers on the plantations, and he added : " Unless the Colonial Secretary succeeds in remedying these evils I shall be no longer ready to vote money for the colonies." " Plantations," he said, " which are manured by the blood of the natives are a curse for the German Empire and have no right to exist at all."

These are all testimonies of the present day. The earlier failures, follies, and crimes of German colonial administration are recorded in many books and still more on the wrack and ruin they wrought, but are ignored here as ancient history. Yet the nation to which these misgoverned colonies belong, and which still needs these reminders of its duties, aspires to outvie this country as a colonial Power, and assures an unbelieving world that it possesses a unique civilizing mission and can do our work much better than we ourselves.

CHAPTER IX

THE ALIENATION BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

No one can have had extended intercourse with Germans of the various tribes, or have closely followed German literature, even of the more ephemeral kinds, without realizing the important political, social, and temperamental differences which separate North and South. These differences create a genuine racial incompatibility, and this incompatibility has rather been accentuated than minimized by the past forty-three years of outward political union. It is constitutional, organic, fundamental, and is one of the great outstanding facts in German life; for in whatever direction one looks—in thought, culture, politics, civil and social relationships—its presence and its fruits are conspicuous. Like body and spirit, North and South may be combined, but they refuse to be blended or unified.

I. Prussia as a Disruptive Influence

The incompatibility is historical and existed long before the tribes came together. It was no mere political accident that the States of South and Central Germany delayed their entrance into a union with Prussia and the North as long as it seemed prudent to do so. When in 1866 Austria divided the old Germanic Confederation against Prussia over the Holstein question, Bavaria, Würtemberg, Saxony, Darmstadt, Hesse, and Hanover all took sides against the northern kingdom, and in the succeeding war fought on Austria's side. In its turn the North German Confederation was at first confined to

the States north of the Main, and only later did the Southern States join, and so complete the Empire as we know it.

Talleyrand said in 1814: "The topographical construction of the Prussian monarchy makes ambition a necessity for it. Its interest is its right. The way to keep Prussia as lean as possible is to maintain the small German States and to increase the medium States." The minor States from that time onward have always been conscious that Prussia was an enemy of their independence, and their decision to join the Confederation of 1869 was due as much to the motive of self-preservation as to enthusiasm for the national idea; they knew that united they might hope to stand, but that divided there was a certainty that some at least would fall.

Even to-day there is no greater political fiction extant than the idea that the German States are a perfectly happy family, knitted together by brotherly love, inspired by a mutual respect and confidence, and eager to outvie each other in individual self-effacement for the common cause of the Empire. Beneath the conception of a reunited Germany there is undoubtedly a strong foundation of genuine patriotic sentiment—a sentiment, be it remembered, that Prussia discouraged so long as discouragement served its purpose, which was to get, first Austrian hegemony, and then Austria itself, out of the way—but the enthusiasm which fired the national movement of the forties and again of the seventies of last century has lost greatly in ardour and intensity.

For this Prussia alone is responsible. From the beginning the part played by Prussia politically, as the predominant partner in the confederation, has been that not of a big brother, but an overbearing master, and its undue influence, its arrogance, and its continual inroads upon particularist rights and sentiment have evoked deep resentment and created widespread alarm. In entering the Empire the smaller States did so with pride and large expectations; to-day they know that the Empire is for them just a political necessity, for it is their only existing guarantee and security against

Prussian aggression. When Bismarck said of the federal Princes that "these gentlemen might think themselves lucky to be provided with a roof to their heads," he only voiced the mind and prejudices of the entire ruling caste of Prussia. The South German Prince Hohenlohe, one of the soberest-minded of contemporary German statesmen, never concealed his conviction that official Prussia cared for the Empire only in so far as it was allowed to control it, and that the little States were tolerated rather than welcome as Prussia's associates. "When I am amongst Prussian Excellencies," he wrote as late as 1898, "the contrast between North and South Germany becomes very perceptible to me. South German Liberalism is no match for the (North German) young aristocrats. They are too numerous, too powerful, and have the kingdom and the army too much on their side. As I laboured from 1866 to 1870 for the union of South and North, so I must strive now to keep Prussia attached to the Empire. For all these gentlemen do not care a fig for the Empire, and would rather give it up to-day than to-morrow."

The explanation of the distrust of the Empire which is continually shown by the Prussian Junkers is that they see the control of Imperial policy passing more and more from their grasp, so that on many questions—particularly questions involving their personal interests—they no longer enjoy in the Imperial Diet the privileged position which is still theirs in the Diet of Prussia. Deputy Dr. F. Naumann said in the Reichstag on January 23, 1914:

"Speeches have been made in the Prussian Upper House warning the Imperial Chancellor not to be too Imperial, not to show too much feeling for the Empire, for Prussia is the basis of the Empire. Of course, Prussia is the historical basis of the Empire, but upon this foundation the Imperial building has been developed further, and yet after fifty years of practical Imperial work the Prussians come and say, 'We did not intend it thus; the Empire is becoming too strong, too German, and then how much Prussianism will remain?' The day has now come which Bismarck foretold in 1877, when we

have an Imperial Finance Minister whose enemy is the Prussian Finance Minister. The tension increases the more the Conservatives feel that they are no longer so certain of the Imperial Finance Minister as they thought they were by birthright."

The causes of this deep-seated difference between North and South are the worthier of inquiry since it will be found that they, too, belong to the things that are wrong with Germany. Every succeeding generation of German statesmen is aware of the difference without being able to remove it. In Prussia its existence is more or less sincerely deplored as universally as it is recognized; in the South there is the same general recognition of the fact, yet without an equal regret. For North Germany seeks assimilation, and South Germany will not have assimilation at any price. In his book "Imperial Germany" Prince von Bülow frankly admits the difference, and throws some light upon its origin and causes when he says that, while German intellectual life was developed in the West and South, Prussia's special contribution to German civilization has been political—the creation of the State. That is perfectly true. While the conquerors and colonists of the North-East of Germany were still engaged in the difficult task of establishing themselves in that unpromising region, winning victories over hostile tribes, inhospitable climate, and penurious soil, the seal of culture had already been set upon the West and South, and this part of the country has continued to be the true nursery of German civilization—the home of its poetry and philosophy, its music and art. Lessing, Fichte, and Wagner were Saxons, Holbein and Dürer were Bavarians, Goethe was a Frankforter, Wieland, Schiller, and Hegel were Swabians, Beethoven was a Rhinelander, and Bach a Thuringian. Kant was, indeed, born in East Prussia, but he was of direct Scottish ancestry. Even yet the South is apt to regard the North as somewhat barbarous, while the North despises the South as weak and too little strenuous.

As Prussia has never been the guide of Germany in

intellectual matters, neither has it in political. All real advances in popular liberty have been made in the South; never in its history has Prussia led the way. A hundred years and again fifty years ago the other German States looked to it for the "saving deed" that would have brought them into line with Western nations, but such a leadership of Germany was not to Prussia's mind. It has stood still while the other States have gone forward. Prussia's special contribution to German civilization is undoubtedly the State, but because of the circumstances of its origin that contribution has not proved a blessing to the rest of Germany. For it is a State in which the Sovereign is still almost absolute, in which officialism is imbued with the pernicious spirit of caste, and the civic life of the community is largely subordinated to military exigencies. All these things are antipathetic and alien to the South.

"Prussia," says Prince von Bülow with engaging frankness, "is a nation of soldiers and officials." One might ask where, then, does the rest of the community come in? It can hardly be said to come in at all. Unhappily for Prussia, its officers and its higher bureaucracy have traditionally been recruited from a privileged class, that of the aristocrats and landed gentry of the eastern provinces, the most backward part of the monarchy in political enlightenment. A hundred years ago it was this class which chiefly stood in the way of a regenerated Prussia, and it maintains the same obstructive attitude still. Weighing Prussia's hopes of revival after the fateful reverse of Jena, the Minister Baron vom Stein (not a Prussian, but a Nassauer) wrote that unless the nation roused itself from the condition of moral torpor into which it had fallen, "Prussia will decay unregretted and unhonoured, and it will be regarded as a blessing that a Power which first convulsed Europe by its ambitions and continued to disturb it by mischief-making, and has fulfilled no duty either towards itself or the European federation of States, should cease to exist." He attributed the blame for Prussia's backwardness chiefly to its nobility, of whom he wrote:

"The Prussian nobility is a hindrance to the nation because it is numerous, for the most part poor, and clamorous for salaries, offices, privileges, and preferences of every kind. One consequence of its poverty is lack of education, the necessity of being brought up in ill-equipped cadet schools, incapacity for the higher positions, which are reached by seniority, or crowding to the low and petty offices for the sake of bread. This large number of half-educated men enforce their claims to the great injury of their fellow-citizens."

Stein was himself a victim of the Junkers of whose shortcomings he was so conscious, but before he fell he succeeded in introducing far-going land reforms which at least broke the power of feudalism, and he lived to see a system of local self-government set up. So far as the towns were concerned this self-government was fairly democratic, but in the rural districts and the provinces the bureaucracy retained much of its old authority under new forms, and so it has continued to the present day.*

II. The Prussian Spirit in Administration

One of the most successful of Prussian statesmen and administrators of the post-Jena period, Baron von Vincke, said: "The art of administration and government consists in the capacity to see men and things in their true light." But the average Prussian official never sees men in their true light. To him the citizen is an inferior being who exists in order to give scope for the utmost amount of official activity; he is in the world in order to be governed, and government consists not in securing the greatest happiness of the community by the exercise of the smallest restraint, but in making restraint the main purpose and treating happiness as a by-product, which may or may not be yielded, but in any case cannot be regarded as a deliberate aim.

The Prussian bureaucracy has had a rare opportunity

* The reader who is interested will find the German system of local government fully explained in my book "Municipal Life and Government in Germany" (Longmans, Green, & Co., 1914).

of proving its governing capacity in the treatment of three alien elements in the German population—the Danes of Schleswig-Holstein, the French of Alsace-Lorraine, and the Poles of the eastern portion of the monarchy. Its record has been one of dismal and unconditional failure, and the explanation of this failure has lain less in inherent difficulties than in official incapacity to " see men and things in their true light." The spirit which has been shown in the government of Schleswig cannot be better described than in the words by an ex-Landrat who was one of Chief President Köller's most energetic assistants in the enforcement of a resolute and openly avowed policy of force.

" I came here " (to Hadersleben), he said several years ago, " with the burning wish to promote Germanism with all the means at my command. The policy I followed was free from all sentimentality and was based on the principle that Prussia had a right to be master in its own house. It was a policy which was apt to be hard and inconsiderate where necessary. When I could not avoid it I resorted to radical measures, and I do not regret the fact for a moment, and I am still convinced that it is the only right policy."

Prussian officials have governed Alsace-Lorraine ever since the annexation in 1871, and they have been even less successful in conciliating its inhabitants than their colleagues in Schleswig, supposing that conciliation was really desired. From the first the French population has been treated as a vanquished enemy. Deploring the disregard of native sentiment and habits shown in the administration of the two provinces, Dr. F. Naumann, leader of the Radical People's Party, said in the Reichstag on March 14, 1910 :

" When in 1871 Alsace-Lorraine came to Germany as a conquered land, there were those who regarded it as the fulfilment of a long-cherished wish that this lost brotherland should at last be brought into the Germanic fellowship. It might have appeared then that Germany would not have been able to do too much to offer proof of its friendship and good-will in order to accustom it to the

old home, which formerly showed it much neglect. But no sooner had Alsace-Lorraine been won than its interest disappeared. If Baden had from 1871 to now been ruled by as many Prussian officials as Alsace-Lorraine, and had Baden been subject to the dictatorship paragraphs, what do you think would have become of Baden, indubitably German though it is ? "

From Germany's standpoint it would unquestionably have been an act of wisdom to have added the annexed provinces from the first, as was once proposed, to the neighbouring States of Baden and Bavaria. The French population might not even then have accepted graciously the new rule, but at any rate it would have been happier and would have been spared the nameless humiliations and cruelties which the Prussian iron heel has inflicted on it. It is characteristic of the narrowness of the Prussian official mind that annoyance and heartburning have been caused even more by unnecessary acts of petty persecution and chicanery than by the larger measures of restraint deemed to be dictated by public policy. One of the most foolish of these minor measures has been the wholesale proscription of the French language. Not only does the ban apply to the schools, but the public performance of classical French plays has repeatedly been forbidden, and there are districts in which the use of French words in trade is forbidden ; thus hairdressers may not use the word " coiffeur," nor fashionable milliners the word " nouveauté," though the words may be used elsewhere in Germany. Not long ago a Mülhausen second-hand bookseller was cited before the police because he had described himself as an " antiquaire " instead of an " antiquar."

For a time the attempt to Germanize Alsace-Lorraine went so far that in the registration of births the French surnames were rendered into the nearest Latin equivalents. Thus Marcel was registered Marcellus, René Renatus, and Germaine Germania. Indignation and ridicule eventually caused the abolition of the practice. On the language question, however, Prussian officials are no more tolerant in Alsace-Lorraine than at home. Not only are visiting

politicians and labour leaders—English, French, Danish—refused permission to use their native language in public speeches in Prussia, but the same petty spirit is shown when there can be no suggestion of political purpose. Thus when the Norwegian explorer Amundsen visited the country in 1913 he was not allowed to lecture in his own tongue.

Nevertheless, Professor Dr. Paasche, first Vice-President of the Reichstag, lamented quite recently that in spite of every attempt at repression the French language is spreading in Lorraine and that even in Strassburg more French is now spoken than in the days of French rule.

No completer confession of the failure of the Prussian method of governing the French provinces by force and terror was ever made than that implied unconsciously by Herr von Bethmann Hollweg when he said on January 10, 1914, in relation to the addition to the Federal Council of members representing these provinces under their new Constitution: "This Constitution has disturbed the balance of power in the Federal Council to the prejudice of Prussia, owing to the addition of three new votes given to Alsace-Lorraine." It was taken for granted that these votes would go against Prussia, and for good reasons.

The episode of Zabern, of December 1913, opened the eyes of all Germany to the actual spirit of Prussian administration.* On that occasion the Imperial Diet uttered its protests with unaccustomed frankness. Only the Prussian Junker party dissociated itself from the national protest and defended the military and the bureaucracy through thick and thin. In the Prussian Lower House (January 13, 1914) a Conservative judge went so far as to say that Alsace-Lorraine suffered from too little dragooning rather than too much, and that still more of the Prussian spirit was needed to its pacification. "The chief blame," he said, "is due to the civil administration, which is without Prussian officials, who know what a State owes to its citizens. A responsible statesman in such a position cannot decide by justice

* *See* pp. 124–129.

alone; he must consider interests of State. A policy of conciliation in Alsace could be to nobody's advantage. The Prussian spirit, which governs not according to sentimentality, but objectivity, must be re-established, and the bureaucracy from top to bottom must be cleared of all unsuitable elements in the interest of Prussian prestige, on which the Empire rests."

The arrogance of the Prussian spirit will be the better appreciated when it is remembered that these words were written about a part of the Empire which no more belongs to Prussia than to the Republic of Hamburg.

The record of misgovernment in the Polish provinces is one of equal failure, except that the story is an older and a longer one, and that the disaster has been on a larger scale. The results at the present time were summarized by Professor Paasche in an article in the *National Zeitung* so lately as February 1914. Speaking specially of the province of Posen, he said:

"The Polish language gains not only in the country districts, but in the towns as well, and even in the capital of Posen. The Polish middle class grows, while the German decreases. German Catholic priests, proud of their nationality, who dare, on the Emperor's birthday, to hoist the German flag are despised and mocked in the Polish Press. For eight years there has been no Archbishop in Gnesen, for the authorities have not dared to install in that 'German' town a German Archbishop who would put a stop to the anti-German agitation of the Polish clerics."

And what is the secret of these failures to conciliate races whose good-will and contentment should be the paramount object of policy? It is simply official incapacity to "see men and things in their true light"—in other words, inability to see that Danes and French and Poles are not Germans or Prussians and cannot be made such.

Referring to the Zabern incident, an able writer in *Das freie Wort* (February 1914) stated the matter well in the following words, which apply in spirit to the entire system of Prussian administration:

"What we have seen in Zabern and the events con-

nected with it is a foreign world—the military spirit in conflict with the civil spirit, Prussianism in conflict with the entire sentiment of the rest of Germany, military conceptions of honour in conflict with the civilian conceptions of honour. Something of the old Junker spirit which, in Prince Hohenlohe's words, 'mocks at the Empire' comes to the surface, showing Prussia not only as the leading Power in Germany, but determining its public spirit and civic consciousness—not Prussia in the Empire, but the Empire in Prussia, and militarism on the Prussian pattern supreme. No one can wish to dispute or minimize Prussia's conspicuous services to the Empire, but South Germans cannot be made into Prussians, and all efforts at unification of that kind will be met with vehement resistance. Intellectual movements cannot be commanded, and a desired mentality cannot be drilled into people; it can only be implanted by long, discreet, patient, and devoted educational work. Prussia is an efficient conqueror, but a bad Germanizer, and Alsace-Lorraine as we see it is the result.

"Zabern is the product of false methods of Germanization from which Alsace-Lorraine and the whole Empire suffer equally. The people of the two provinces wish to be Alsacers and Lorrainers and not Prussians. But such particularism is regarded as a crime against the State. The wish to preserve the individuality of a country and its people, which is permissible in the Prussian, Saxon, Baden, and Bavarian Parliaments, is regarded as an excess hostile to Germany when avowed in Strassburg. We are told that Alsace-Lorraine must be Prussianized. As if the country had not been under Prussian administration ever since it was regained! Have not all the Governors and their secretaries been Prussians? And yet after forty-three years we are further back than at the beginning."

Prussian officialism and militarism, of the same flesh and bone, are hostile to every form and expression of personal freedom; they discourage all individuality; and they exalt the State to a position so dominating and supreme as to rob the idea of citizenship of all inner

meaning. The spirit of official Prussia is hard, unpliable, unsympathetic, without imagination or any of that "sweet reasonableness" of which a famous English essayist desired a fuller portion for his own countrymen. It is the spirit of force, mastery, domination, but because it is nothing more it fails to justify itself even in the sphere of government, the one which Prince von Bülow claims as peculiarly its own. No one in Germany doubts that the Prussian spirit has greatly helped to bring Germany to its present position of pre-eminence both as a political and an economic Power, but indebtedness for past services does not make that spirit any more acceptable to the South Germans. "It is high time," says a recent writer, Dr. H. Bartsch, "to call halt to the political tendencies which have obtained a hold in Prussia, where endeavours have for a long time been made to poison the Imperial body politic with the worst elements of Prussianism—otherwise so rich and sympathetic—its bureaucracy, spiritual tutelage, soul-destroying uniformity, and fiscalism. The young Empire must defend itself against this lust of domination just as against the forces that make for the enslavement of personal liberty." *

The late Professor Friedrich Paulsen, the distinguished Berlin scholar, in the last conversation which I had with him before his death, put the matter with characteristic moderation in the following words: "Prussian discipline (*Zucht*)," he said, "was perhaps necessary for Germany. It has certainly helped to pull us together and has compelled us to face the facts of practical life more frankly than we were once inclined to do, but there is a strong feeling that it has now outlived its necessity and its utility, and we would like to free ourselves from it."

III. The Prussian Spirit of Ascendancy

This desire of the rest of Germany to live its own life in its own way is what Prussia does not understand and will not concede. Everything that has been said of its attitude towards the "conquered provinces," as the

* "Preussicher Partikularismus,"

Prussian Conservative Press even to-day persists in calling Schleswig-Holstein, Alsace-Lorraine, and the Polish territories, holds good in spirit of its attitude towards the other German States. Prussia insists on being master in Germany, and will not rest until the whole Empire has been Prussianized. Bismarck has confessed that he began his Ministerial life with the same idea, but learned the error of his ways. Unfortunately this confession belonged to the time of his retirement, though it was doubtless a true reflection of an altered temper. "There are many," he said in 1893, "who are glad to be citizens of the German Empire but will not be Prussians, and I have always feared lest the Empire should develop 'Great-Prussian tendencies,'" and of those Prussians who wish to "swallow up the other German tribes" he said: "You are the real particularists, for you do not know the non-Prussian Germany. The Germans cling to their dynasties and the dynasties cling to Germany. That spirit has a positive value and we must cultivate it." That is the attitude of all the non-Prussian peoples, and nothing in the future development of German affairs will alter it.

There is in progress in Germany, therefore, the same struggle which we see in Europe at large—a struggle for the right of small States and races to retain their individuality, and to work out their destinies in their own way, and everywhere Prussia proclaims itself as the enemy of this aspiration, so just in itself, so immensely valuable for the interests of progress and civilization.

Another aspect of this divorce in sentiment and ideals between North and South is the political. While the North has still failed to emancipate itself from autocracy, a decidedly Liberal spirit prevails in the South. Here the South owes much to its earlier culture, and to the influence of the currents of emancipated thought which flowed across the French frontier at the end of the eighteenth century, and particularly during the period of Napoleon's domination, from which time the kingdoms of Bavaria and Würtemberg both date. The readiness with which the peoples of the South placed themselves under Napoleon's

protection must not be judged altogether to their discredit. They were in sympathy with the French spirit, and whatever the other effects of Napoleon's despotism may have been, French influence at that time familiarized them with ideas of liberty which they had not entertained before, and laid the foundations of political systems more democratic than any others in Germany save those of the City States.

To-day the political and civil life of the South is still marked by a freedom and freshness which are entirely lacking in the North; neither the political nor the social extremes are so violent; and the claim which Prince Hohenlohe once made in praise of the South German nobility, that it likewise has been to some extent "democratized," is also well founded. Prince von Bülow has added his testimony to the same effect. "It is quite true," he writes, "that in many cases in non-Prussian Germany, owing to other political traditions, conceptions of State rule and freedom prevail that are fundamentally different from those that have sprung from the soil of Prussian traditions. In the South there is a tendency to slacken the reins of political power below; in Prussia a tendency to tighten them from above." * He is therefore compelled to admit that while official Prussia suspects the democratic spirit of the South as dangerous, the South German is repelled by "the antiquated politics of Prussian State life." Was it to punish the South for its Liberalism or only to teach it to depend on Prussia that in the French war of 1870 it was almost divested of troops, and left exposed to invasion from the West had the French been alert enough? The Würtemberg Minister of War at that time, Herr von Suckow, has related that in 1868, when war already seemed imminent, while Bismarck professed "complete sympathy with our South German brothers, whom we are willing to help in every way," Moltke told him flatly that Prussia would "not trouble about such uncertain allies as the democracies of the South," and Moltke was as good as his word.

"The Bavarian, the Swabian, the Badenser regard men and matters with other eyes than the Prussian and the

* "Imperial Germany," English translation.

North German," said the present Imperial Chancellor in the Federal Diet so lately as January 23, 1914, and it is in political life that this different South German standpoint is particularly characteristic. South and North are alike in the fact that neither lives under parliamentary government as understood in the democratic countries of Western Europe. In Bavaria and Saxony, in Würtemberg and Baden, no less than in Prussia, Governments and Ministers are eligible and removable only by the Crown, to which alone they are responsible, and through them the Crown exercises an absolute veto upon the proceedings of the elected Legislatures. Their Constitutions do, indeed, recognize the principle of "Ministerial responsibility," but this responsibility is a legal fiction, intended merely to protect the Sovereign against popular criticism and, in fact, to entrench him the more securely behind his autocratic privileges. In judging political laws and institutions, however, everything depends upon the spirit in which they are enforced and applied, and with constitutional principles hardly distinguishable from those obtaining in the North, the populations of the Southern States enjoy far more real individual liberty, a greater active share in national government, and a truer sense of free citizenship than fall to the lot of Prussians.

Prince Ludwig of Bavaria, speaking at the centenary of the cession of Erlangen to Bavaria (July 6, 1910), could justly boast: "If you have in a hundred years become good Bavarians we have to thank first of all the constitution which King Max gave, and which has been maintained inviolable ever since. A freer people than the Bavarian does not exist, and it is a joy for the royal house to be at the head of so free and true a people." Even the Socialist *Vorwärts* had to admit that in this claim there was much truth.

The South has always seen in Prussia and the Prussian spirit the menace of a return to German political conditions as they were before the revolution of 1848. Hence it was that when the parliaments of the Southern States were discussing the question of union with the North German Confederation in 1871 the principal objection

was the danger that any union with Prussia would mean some forfeit of the free spirit of their institutions. That fear has been justified repeatedly. Professor Karl Heimburger, of Karlsruhe, a member of the Baden Diet, said not long ago: "In purely State affairs the South German Governments allow themselves under the pressure of Prussia to be led into measures which are opposed to our past Liberal practice, and are the more painful to us since we have hitherto not been accustomed to them." The latest instance was in 1910, when a new Imperial Law of Association was passed that was altogether reactionary from the standpoint of the Southern States, which had long lived under a more Liberal law. Happily a way of avoiding friction was easily found. Judicial practice is often better than legal theory in the South; the objectionable provisions of the law were tacitly allowed to remain a dead letter, and, as the informer is not the honoured institution in the South that he is in Prussia, no harm was done. Nevertheless, Ludwig Thoma, a well-known Bavarian publicist, wrote recently: "We South Germans need to be on our guard. The time may soon come when all South German Governments and all parliamentary representatives, without distinction of party, may have to unite to keep our administration of justice intact. The first condition of security is absolute distrust of every overture from the Prussian Government."

In relation to Imperial affairs it is the constant grievance of the Southern and the smaller States generally that Prussia insists upon impressing the Prussian seal everywhere, and as far as possible upon moulding German policy and institutions according to its will and liking. For practical purposes the Imperial Government and Civil Service and the higher administration of the army are all Prussian in constitution and spirit. It is significant that even a South German Governor of Alsace-Lorraine like Prince Hohenlohe accepted so naturally the Prussian claim to control Imperial affairs that he begged Berlin to "send some Prussian officials." Alsace-Lorraine got Prussian officials then and always, and we all know

what a mess Prussian officialism and militarism between them have made of the government of the annexed provinces.

It is only seldom that acute friction between the Federal Sovereigns and Governments, as represented in the Federal Council or Executive, comes to light. That body and all its component members have a common interest in minimizing differences as much as possible, and, moreover, the constitution and procedure of the Council afford a guarantee against undue Prussian aggression. Happily for the independence and self-respect of the minor States, although Prussia has two-thirds both of the population and the area of the Empire, the Constitution allows it less than one-third of the Federal Council (a disadvantage minimized, however, by the fact that the presidency of the Council is reserved to Prussia, and that all propositions made to the Council must pass through the representatives of that State), and though it has a majority of deputies in the Imperial Diet, the advantage thus secured is counteracted by the veto vested in that Council. But what cannot be done by voting down opposition can often be achieved by the policy of setting one State against another, and by stubborn and persistent pressure exerted to the point when it becomes easier and more politic to yield than to resist.

Not long ago a South German deputy complained, "The Federal Governments in whose name the Minister has spoken are only another name for Prussia," and on January 10, 1914, the Imperial Chancellor, as Prussian Minister-President, boasted in the Prussian Upper House that "in difficult situations Prussia has always been supported in the Federal Council," and that "Prussian rights have never been invaded."

The attitude of Prussia towards the other States varies in accordance with their size and resisting power. Bavaria is too strong to be threatened, and, besides, it reserved important rights as a condition of joining the Imperial union. Yet the Bavarians have not yet forgiven or forgotten an audacious interference in a matter personal to

themselves and the Bavarian Crown which took place in 1902. When in the summer of that year the Lower House of the Bavarian Diet, for reasons which it thought sufficient, declined to vote a sum of money desired by the Prince Regent for the purposes of art, the Emperor, hearing of the decision while cruising in the North Sea, promptly telegraphed to the Regent his "deep indignation" at the "crass ingratitude" of the Bavarian Parliament, and offered to provide the money out of his own pocket. On the other hand, a little State like Lippe can be browbeaten outright, as in the dynastic quarrel between the Emperor and the Prince of this little realm, a quarrel which ended in the former's defeat. So far does Prussia push its pretensions that it has not hesitated to usurp functions which belong to the federal Princes jointly. When, for example, the consent of the Junkers in the Prussian Diet had to be bought to the Government's Canal Bill in 1902, the Government did not scruple to give them a formal pledge that, with a view to minimizing the material injury that might be inflicted on the landed interest, dues should be levied on the rivers flowing through German territory.* Such dues were known to be contrary to the provisions of the Imperial Constitution, and in any case they could not be imposed save with the joint consent of the Federal Council and the Imperial Diet, yet such is the arrogance of Prussia towards the other States that its Government gave this promise, and actually recorded it in a statute, without consulting the other States. The resentment caused by this attempt to invade federal jurisdiction, in connexion with a project which seriously affected the interests of Saxony, Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden, was perhaps as much responsible as economic considerations for the angry outburst which followed in the Central and Southern States, and explains the fact that the Reichstag has not even yet honoured the bribe offered to the Prussian large

* The great proprietors of the corn-growing districts of East Prussia feared that the result of the building of canals would be the cheapening of transport in the West, thus facilitating the competition of foreign corn arriving from the adjacent coasts.

landowners on its behalf. But Prussia's assumption of superiority is so natural that it asserts it, just as it breaks international treaties, without any consciousness that it is doing wrong.

Most of all the South Germans resent the attempt of the Prussian Junkers to assert in the Imperial Parliament the same domination which they are able to impose upon their own special Diet in the North. They do not altogether succeed, but because the Government dare not overlook the fact that its strength in Prussia rests on the support of this privileged party, it defers to their demands and prejudices to a far greater extent than is palatable to the other fractions, and the net effect is unquestionably to give to Imperial policy a reactionary colour. It is instructive to know how the matter appears to South Germans themselves. Professor Karl Heimburger, the Baden deputy already quoted, wrote recently:

"No one is in any doubt that the malign influence exerted by the Prussian Junkers on Imperial policy rests less upon the power of the Conservative party in the Imperial Diet than upon its representation in the Prussian Diet, and this influence is so powerfully felt in South Germany that we have a very strong interest in shutting off its source—the Prussian three-class franchise. Unfortunately it has often appeared as though an insuperable antagonism in political opinion existed between the North and South of our fatherland. It cannot be denied that certain differences of temperament separate the North and South Germans, and that these find expression in their political views and activities. What, however, has accentuated the existing differences due to the historical individuality of the various German tribes—differences whose influence is on the whole rather beneficent than injurious—and has often caused them to take the form of irreconcilable and embittered antagonisms, is chiefly the fundamentally different foundation upon which political life is built in the South and North. In the South the franchise for the Diets expressly recognizes the equality of all citizens and the policy of the South German States reflects the influence of this fact. It may not be

a democratic policy, but it takes account in a high degree of the needs of the masses of the population. The policy of Prussia rests on a franchise which robs the masses of the people of all political influence, and it necessarily bears an aristocratic stamp and is hostile to the people. If, therefore, antipathy to Prussia finds wide expression in the South it is at root aimed not so much at Prussianism as at the official Prussian treatment of public affairs, which to us of the South is so inexplicable and which is alien to our inmost feelings. And the antipathy is all the stronger because this spirit is shown not only in regard to purely Prussian affairs, but even more conspicuously in the attitude of Prussia in Imperial politics, and so paralyses the influence of the legislature elected on manhood suffrage."

The present Imperial Chancellor, Herr von Bethmann Hollweg, himself recently admitted the political basis of the alienation between Prussia and the South. Speaking in the Prussian Upper House as Minister-President on January 10, 1914, he said of the relationships between the Imperial and Prussian Diets: "The hostility against Prussia has steadily increased since the memories of the national struggles and of what the Empire owes to Prussia have been pressed into the background by the material interests of the present. The disparity between parliamentary conditions in the Empire and in Prussia, in consequence of the different electoral laws, has steadily increased, and the position of the Government, which has to work with both legislatures, has in consequence become increasingly difficult."

But to say this is merely to state the difficulty while evading any recognition of its causes, and the principal explanation is that the Conservative-Junker party, which rules the Government in the Prussian Diet, claims that, in virtue of that ascendancy, it shall enjoy the same privileged position in the Imperial Diet; that Prussian legislation, as dictated by its reactionary spirit, shall set the pace of Imperial legislation; that no political or financial measure which is objectionable to the majority in the Prussian Diet shall be passed by the Imperial Diet against

its wishes; in a word, that Herr von Bethmann Hollweg, as Imperial Chancellor, shall be as obedient to its will as he is in his capacity as Minister-President of Prussia.

It is not surprising that the opinion should be gaining strength in the South that Prussia's constitutional leadership of the Empire is a questionable advantage. This doubt finds frequent expression in the Reichstag itself, where a strong vote could be obtained any day for such an amendment of the Constitution as would effectually break down Prussian domination. Many persons would be glad to see the hereditary right of the Hohenzollerns to be German Emperors replaced by an elective arrangement such as existed under the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. Still more would they welcome the abolition of the privileges secured to Prussia in the Federal Council in virtue of which it is now able, even without controlling a majority of votes, to exercise a determining voice over the proceedings of that body, and hence to mould Imperial policy in accordance with its will.

CHAPTER X

REFORMS FROM WITHIN AND FROM WITHOUT

It is probable that most readers who have gone so far would be disappointed if they were not taken further and asked to consider possible measures for remedying the things that have been shown to be amiss with Germany at the present time. There can be the less objection to suggesting such measures since most of the evils enumerated in the foregoing pages are rooted in the political life and institutions of the nation, and have nothing to do with the large questions of an international character which will inevitably arise in the event of Germany having at the end of the war to accept, instead of dictating, terms of settlement. Even were Germany by any possibility to come out of the war in a position that enabled it to escape outside interference, all these evils would remain as much a source of mischief and danger as before, in some cases in an aggravated form.

If, therefore, Germany itself has reason enough to set its house in order, the nations which have been dragged into war against their will are interested in a still higher degree. They have not shed their blood and expended their treasure so lavishly for the mere purpose of momentarily checking Germany's arrogant will, nor yet of administering punishment for a crime which will rank amongst the darkest in history. For the price of war they want a lasting peace. Before we can have such a peace, however, the necessary conditions must be created, for in Germany they do not now exist.

I. The Spirit of the Settlement

The settlement can be the more usefully considered from this standpoint the more successful we are in project-

ing our minds into the future, beyond the things that are transient and fugitive, however terrible these may be in reality, and in endeavouring, as far as is humanly possible, to picture the political situation which will have to be faced when the smoke of battle has disappeared and the task of reconstruction has to be taken in hand, assuming always that it will fall to the Allied Powers to award punishment where it is most justly due.

Some words of the Prussian General Gneisenau, written to Baron vom Stein after the campaign which broke Napoleon's power (January 27, 1814), have peculiar interest at the present time:

"Providence has led us hither. We should take revenge for so many miseries wrought upon the nations, for so much arrogance endured, so that the saying *Discite justiciam, moniti non temnere divos* may be justified. If we fail so to do, we shall be miserable creatures who deserve once every two years to be frightened out of our lazy complacency and threatened again with the slave whip."

Applied to the situation which exists in Europe a hundred years later, this saying may be hard, but it is just, and that it shall be acted on in spirit is the duty of the Allied Powers not only to themselves but to the whole civilized world, whose benevolent attitude towards them has been prompted overwhelmingly by the belief that this war is their war as well as ours, and that the defeat of Germany will mean and must mean the emancipation of civilization at large from an oppressive incubus.

Redress, however, may be of two kinds, material and ideal, and of the former, as expressed by such penalties as indemnity and loss of territory, I have neither justification nor disposition to speak. Nor, taking a long view of history, are these material questions paramount, though to most spectators of the tragedy now being enacted before our eyes they will doubtless so appear. Looking to the future, and the problems and responsibilities which the future will bring, the question which really matters is, what shall be Germany's coming relationship to the rest of Europe and the world—what shall be

its future influence, its future part in the common mission of civilization? It is futile to speculate on the assumption that Germany, however it may be beaten, will cease to be a Power to be seriously reckoned with, or will even become a sort of outlawed State, with which the rest of the world will have nothing to do, and arguments developed on that line can serve no good purpose.

As, therefore, this momentous question of Germany's future influence as a spiritual force outweighs all considerations of material gain or loss, of territorial readjustments and pocket penalties, so also it raises issues of the utmost delicacy, and perhaps the principal of these is whether and to what extent the internal reforms of which Germany stands in need can be advanced by external assistance. There are some things wrong in Germany today which cannot be altered by outside influence or pressure of any kind, and one of these is the arrogant and overbearing spirit which has led the ruling and authoritative classes of that country to conspire against the harmony of Europe and to indulge wild dreams of universal conquest and domination, with Belgium and the other small States of Europe as the first-fruits. Disillusionment alone will not exorcize nor misfortune eradicate that spirit. A bully may be beaten within an inch of his life, but he will remain a bully still so long as his spirit is unchanged. Here it will be necessary to trust to the transforming influence of reflection, and the calmer mood which will come when the German nation puts away its false gods and returns to the better mind and the truer idealism which for the time have been obscured.

II. Constitutional Reform

Historical analogies are always interesting. In a letter written to Hardenberg on February 7, 1814, Gneisenau argued the unwisdom of leaving Napoleon with his political power unbroken. He was for overturning the despot's throne altogether, and he added:

"Duty dictates it to those who govern the nations, for they have no right to forgive year-long sufferings,

ruined prosperity, and long-endured national disgrace and misfortune by concluding a peace with a tyrant who will at once begin again as soon as he has the power. The curses of their contemporaries and the contempt of posterity will be the punishment of those who lend themselves to such a cowardly decision."

It is probable that the Powers which will award the German Emperor his merited punishment will be more indulgent than those—Prussia among the number—which decided the fate of Napoleon, yet no settlement could be more disastrous than one which left Germany able, in virtue of the unchanged autocratic power of the present or a future Sovereign, to unsettle the peace of Europe within the life of this century.

The discussion of measures like the dismemberment of the Empire, the dethronement of the Hohenzollerns, and other still more violent solutions—which would be no solutions at all—may safely be deferred until they are seriously proposed. The makers of the settlement will presumably be men who will have due regard for the historical past as well as political insight and imagination enough to see beyond the complexities and obscurities of the immediate present and to think not in years but in centuries, and it is not likely that they will be tempted into measures of a merely spectacular significance.

On the other hand, to leave Germany to the mercies of the existing system of semi-absolutism, with its twin evil of militarism, would be to suspend again over the neck of Europe the old sword, only held by a frailer thread than ever. Whatever may be done by reciprocal measures of partial disarmament, it is probable that the real relief from the menace of militarism will have to come by the operation of indirect influences. This evil has been shown to have its root in the Prusso-German system of government. If it be true, as the present Emperor and all Prussian kings from Frederick the Great onward have said, that " the Prussian State rests on the army," it is because the power of the Prussian Crown is virtually absolute, and because the constitutional system under which Prussia is governed is a fraud, though not a

greater fraud than it was intended to be. What is true of Prussia is true of the Empire. Until the relations between the Sovereigns and peoples of Germany are fundamentally changed by the conversion of an illusory constitutional system into a real parliamentary *régime*, under which national policy, both at home and abroad, will be determined and executed by Governments directly responsible to the nation, there will be no hope of a better future. Granted the continued success of the Allies' arms, I for one, while harbouring no uncertainty as to the strength of the influences which make for common accord in Germany, can conceive it as possible that there may come a moment even in the course of the war when, with the prospect of ultimate defeat facing them, both South and West Germany, and even the soberer minds of Prussia itself, would listen with comfort and encouragement to a message of hope from the free nations of Western Europe, whose purpose it should be to remind them that this is a war against militarism, and hence against their enemy as well as ours, and that the downfall of militarism is conditioned by the final abolition of absolute government and the "personal *régime*." Nor would it be the first time in the history of the German nationalities that the promise of greater freedom—a promise too often broken—lightened the misery and sacrifice wrought by war and proved as balm to smarting wounds.

The struggle upon this question will be desperate, but upon it hang issues of incalculable importance not only for Germany but for Europe at large. Most of the Sovereigns will fight stubbornly for their privileges, and in Prussia the Junker party will outvie the Crown in opposition to any change. The suggestions already put forward by the spokesmen of that party for a future Triple Alliance in which Russia shall take the place of Italy proceed altogether from fear of democratic progress under Anglo-French influence and from a desire to make sure the old ascendancy under new conditions. Against all reactionary aspirations from that source the German nation will have to set its face like a flint, and if

necessary it must be able to count on assistance from outside.

For however strong may be one's desire to credit the Emperor and the rest of the German Princes with a reserve of sagacity which has not been disclosed in the past, there seems no justification for the belief that they will voluntarily accept such a curtailment of their present constitutional powers as would be necessitated by the introduction of genuine parliamentary government. If this view be correct the alternatives open seem obvious. Should Germany by any chance come well out of the war, as few people out of that country either believe or hope, its Government and peoples would of course insist on adjusting their own affairs alone. If, however, the more probable contingency should arrive, it would be right and proper to insist that as an integral part of the settlement the defeated Power, having inflicted upon the world so much misery, should be set right within as well as without.

It is interesting to recall some striking words published a short time ago by the Socialist journal *Vorwärts* (April 29, 1911), which seemed to foresee that the defeat of Germany in war could not leave the existing systems of semi-absolutism as they are.

"If one day," it wrote, "the threatened world war occurs, and a European coalition should be directed against the German Empire, how great is the danger that the Empire, whose inner cohesion has been undermined by an obsolete and arrogant *coterie*, may be broken into its original parts. Assume that war occurs (which we less than any others wish) and assume the possibility (though it is not desired by us) that an Anglo-French army broke into North Germany and proclaimed the Kingdom of Hanover, to which there are still pretenders, with a constitution after the English pattern, what an effect would such a proceeding create in Germany, the land so misused by the East Elbe Junkers!"

Were parliamentary government given to all Germany owing to the success of the Allies, there would be historical and political justice in the fact in view of the part played

in the establishment of full parliamentary government in our own country by the battle of the Boyne, in which a Prussian regiment fought on the English side.

III. The Restraint of Militarism

It has been shown that militarism is essentially a Prussian institution, and that though it has been forced on the rest of the country the South in particular is out of sympathy with it. It may be asked, how might the defeat of German arms be expected to react upon Southern sentiment in relation to this evil? It may be accepted as certain that deep resentment would be felt towards Prussia, not from any desire to attribute to it exclusive responsibility for the war, but from a clearer and soberer recognition of Prussian militarism as a perpetual source of national danger. Nevertheless it is not likely that such a conviction, however strong and pronounced, would be capable of producing practical results without corresponding response in Prussia itself. The democratic parties of Prussia have ineffectually fought militarism ever since constitutional weapons were placed in their hands. A disastrous war, discrediting Prussia as well as weakening it, would confirm and strengthen them in a struggle to which, it must be said in fairness, they have devoted their utmost energies. Yet they, too, are under no illusion as to the strength of the forces opposed to them and the political citadel which must be either captured or overthrown before militarism can be dislodged and disarmed. In other words, if the Prusso-German war-lord still remains the absolute arbiter over peace and war, and the political system which makes him and militarism possible is left still in possession, there can be little prospect of permanent relief from the pressure of military despotism.

The introduction of parliamentary government, under which full authority over national affairs would be exercised by the Legislature through Ministers chosen by and responsible to it, would set Germany in the way for remedying this amongst other serious evils from which its national life suffers. The immediate effect of the

change would be that the military administration and the determination of the issue of peace or war would pass from the control of one man into that of the representative assembly. To that extent the power of the military caste would be broken and one of the subtlest enemies of the cause of peace would be put out of action. Bismarck himself, though he did so much to strengthen the power of militarism, was conscious of its danger, and in the reflections for which we are indebted to his retirement he emphasized the need of stringent political control if the military party were not to get out of hand and force the nation into war against its will.

International disagreements will occur always, but the determination of such disagreements by the brutal arbitrament of war is the negation of true democratic principle. The hopes of the Peace Conferences at The Hague in 1899 and 1907 were not wrecked by the delegates of countries with free parliaments, but by those of Germany, which went into the conferences with the fixed intention of flaunting its militarism in the face of the whole world. The surest way of transferring the settlement of disputes from the rule of force to that of peaceful negotiation is to throw upon nations in an increasing degree direct responsibility for the decisions whose consequences they will inevitably have to bear. It is almost inconceivable that two modern republics—say, the United States and France—should find themselves involved in disputes which would not admit of pacific adjustment, for they know that unless democratic government serves the interests of peace in a pre-eminent degree its strongest justification falls to the ground.

The conclusion to be drawn is not that monarchy, owing to inherent defects, is unable to play the same benevolent part in the pacification of the world, but only that it will do this the more effectively in proportion as personal ambitions, dynastic motives, class interests, and above all the menace of a single uncontrolled will are eliminated from the field of possible controversy and friction.

There is certainly no justification for the common objec-

tion of the German military party that the assertion of the principle of parliamentary control over the military system would lessen either the efficiency of national defence or the nation's willingness to make whatever sacrifices the country's interests were shown to require, and whenever this specious argument has been employed the anti-militarists have successfully pointed to Great Britain and France as affording rebutting evidence. The most democratic of all German parties, the Socialist party, has never been wanting in patriotic spirit in times of national danger, and while it is opposed to the present Prussian organization of the army it has always advocated a compulsory military training.

IV. Colonial Expansion

One of the strongest arguments for constitutional reform from Germany's standpoint is the colonial argument, and it will have increased weight in the future. Democratic nations can have no possible interest in furthering German colonization so long as Germany persists in retaining its present system of absolute government, and least of all can this be the case with the Anglo-Saxon races. These races have advanced too far in political liberty and education to be willing to co-operate actively in colonial endeavours with a Power which under present conditions stands for national and political ideals which are at variance with the spirit of the age. One solitary Germany, with its solecisms of absolutism, militarism, Kaiserism, and the rest, is enough for the world under modern conditions, and a multiplication of such Germanies beyond the seas would be a misfortune for mankind. Only when Germany has been modernized by throwing off the last traces of political mediævalism will the democracies of the New World as of the Old have a real interest in welcoming it as a comrade and a partner in the mission of civilization. They will no longer help in creating States of the future and propagating systems of government based on despotic principles, under which one man overrides the wills and controls the destinies of

millions. The doctrine that States rest on armies and that nations exist for divinely ordained rulers is Germany's special contribution to political philosophy, and it has had a long trial at home, with the results we know. We do not wish to see that discredited doctrine imported to other parts of the world, there to create the difficulties and dangers which have wrought so much evil beneath our eyes.

So far as this country in particular is concerned there is one other demand which must be pressed with all force. When Germany has learned the lesson which the present war promises to teach it, the German Government must be required to do its utmost to discourage for the future the campaign of envy and covetousness which has been directed against the British Empire so long and with so much virulence. One of the principal reasons which led Germany to encourage and support Austria in its determination to castigate Serbia—that castigation which was never finished, yet which nevertheless brought about the present war—was the impunity with which the Serbian Government had tolerated agitation against the integrity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. But this agitation was as nothing compared with the malicious and widespread agitation against the British Empire which has gone on in Germany for years unrebuked by either Emperor or Government. It has been fomented primarily by the mischievous Pan-Germanist party, whose hand is against all the world, but it has also been powerfully aided by influential generals, professors, and publicists, and by a powerful Press high in official favour.

As with Chauvinism in general, so with this special manifestation of the Chauvinistic spirit, we are entitled to conclude that if it had not been passively approved by those in authority it would have been actively rebuked and even suppressed. There is no difficulty whatever in putting down in Germany any agitation, any movement, any expression of public opinion which may happen to be embarrassing to the Imperial Government or which for any reason may not be desired by it. That Government has never allowed at home any open agitation which

could be interpreted as a menace to the integrity of the Empire, and the resolute measures taken against undesirable movements in the disaffected Polish, Danish, and French provinces are matters of common knowledge. We have a right to expect that Germany will extend the same treatment to the mischief-makers who have so long been allowed to preach the spoliation of the British Empire as a foremost object of national policy.

It is the custom of every nation to criticize the policy, the ideals, the institutions of the States with which it is brought into contact, and even when the criticism is made without either sympathy or knowledge there is tacit agreement that it belongs to the things that are lawful. From criticism, whencesoever it comes, Englishmen will never shrink; we do not writhe beneath Germany's hatred, and we are unperturbed even by its humour. The agitations of the Pan-Germanists and the rest of the Chauvinists, however, are open and avowed incitements to acts of public robbery, and hence they transgress the limits of bare decency. So long as the German nation is encouraged to indulge the immoral yet wholly illusory hope of one day acquiring by force and fraud territories which have passed into the custody of the Anglo-Saxon race, so long will it wait in vain for our help in its efforts to secure outlets for its own colonizing and commercial energies.

V. The Position of Prussia

What the German States and tribes may wish to do with the Emperor who has led them not to "glorious days" but to disaster is a matter for themselves. If they are wise they will ask themselves whether the constitutional provision which makes the Kings of Prussia hereditary German Emperors is prudent or necessary. It is a question which has often been asked in the South before now, and never so seriously as during recent years, as Prussia has more and more pressed its claim to dominate the Empire and override the "particularist" traditions and sentiments of the federated States by its own

unsympathetic spirit. The hereditary headship of Prussia was the creation not of the German peoples, but of Bismarck and the generals. The Princes had to accept it whether they wished or not, while the German nation itself was not consulted until the transaction was completed. Yet an hereditary Emperorship formally vested in the Kings of Prussia cannot be said to be a necessity of German unity. Prussia's hegemony is secured by its very position—its size, population, and political and material pre-eminence—and even were a Wittelsbacher, for example, to be the occasional head of the Empire, instead of a Hohenzollern, Prussia would not lose in real dignity. The probabilities are that were the States allowed to choose at every succession, their choice would continue to fall upon the Prussian Sovereign whenever he had already shown sagacity corresponding to the responsibility of the office. If that qualification were lacking they would be wise enough to think more of their own welfare than of the *amour-propre* of the Hohenzollerns.

Even if in practice the Kings of Prussia remained in unbroken succession the very fact of their life tenure of office would exercise a wholesome restraint, and one which the events of the past twenty-five years shows to have been sorely needed. It is hardly conceivable that such sentiments as "There is one will in the Empire, and that is my will," and "I am the master, and I tolerate no other," which the present generation of German Princes has tolerated so meekly, will commend themselves to all the rulers of all the States for all time.

Such a change would introduce no innovation in German political history. The early Emperors of the old Germanic Empire were elected by all the Princes, and though in the fourteenth century the equal right of these Princes to take part in the election was abolished, the electoral principle was maintained to the end, the right being henceforth confined to a handful of the more powerful Sovereigns, the so-called "Electors." Frederick the Great himself, for his own reasons, had such a regard for the elective principle in the case of the Kings of Poland

that he entered into a treaty with Catherine of Russia whereby both Sovereigns bound themselves to maintain it by force if necessary.

VI. The Nation and the Settlement

Assuming that the settlement of the war will take the usual treaty form, a question arises which opens up wide perspectives to those who are convinced that some of the existing methods of diplomacy are antiquated. Who will be the contracting parties to a treaty of that kind? The Sovereigns or the peoples? In democratic countries the pledge of the Government carries the word and faith of the nation in whose name it speaks. We have seen this in the case of the Belgian treaty of neutrality. Great Britain and France both signed that treaty, and both have defended it. Its violation on the sole plea of political advantage came from Germany, whose act is a warning of the worthlessness of any future undertaking given by the German Emperor and Princes, should interest ever happen to conflict with honour.

This time Europe should take no risks, but insist that behind the promises made and the pledges given there shall be a substantial guarantee that they will be duly honoured, and such a guarantee can only be given by the nation concerned. Under the German Constitution treaties are concluded by the Emperor personally. The Imperial Government may co-operate in an executive capacity, but it is the creature of the Emperor and the Federal Council. The Imperial Diet, on the other hand, is altogether inoperative and powerless in the matter, though it is the one body through which the national voice and will can be faithfully expressed, since it proceeds from manhood suffrage. Hence the advisability of bringing the German people through their central Parliament into any conventional settlement which may follow the war. It should be consulted and made a party to such an agreement at least jointly with the representatives of the treaty-breaking Sovereigns, but if necessary over their heads. Such a step would give sanction for the first

time in German history to the principle that the issues of war and peace are too grave to be left to the uncertain wisdom of single individuals. The innovation would shock the old school of diplomatists, but it will hardly be pretended that the recognized diplomatic methods are all so businesslike, and their success so certain, that better results could not be obtained by a different procedure.

The foregoing suggestions are put forward with the full consciousness that their practical value depends almost altogether upon conditions the realization of which still appears remote. None the less, they seem to afford a clue to the policy of internal reform which Germany must adopt if, vanquished or not, it is to rid itself of the enemies of its reputation and the obstacles to its progress as a civilized Power. Germany to-day stands at the parting of the ways. If by any chance it should come favourably out of the war, the readjustment of its political conditions would in effect depend upon two factors, the willingness of the rulers to yield to the modern spirit and the docility of the people, and in view of past experience the probabilities are strong that success, in sanctifying the doctrine of force, might further confirm and perpetuate the institutions in which that doctrine is embodied. That would mean that absolutism and militarism would be riveted upon the nation by bands no longer of iron, but of steel. For the German people, therefore, victory in this war would be infinitely more disastrous than defeat.

If, on the other hand, it should fall to the Allies to decide the terms of settlement, their motto must be a stern, resolute, unyielding " Never again ! " Never again should it be within the power of a German war-lord to pour out destruction and desolation upon a continent and plunge the whole world into agony. Never again should a military caste, whose ambitions have been fed on the arrogance of generations of ascendancy, be tolerated as a despotic power not merely within but above the commonwealth, dominating it by a will superior both to the law and the Constitution. Never again should a veiled autocracy, which defrauds the German nation of

the elementary rights of citizenship, be allowed to usurp the place and responsibility of the community, overriding its voice, perverting its judgment, and corrupting its conscience. Let these things that are paramountly wrong with the German nation be righted and a host of minor evils would in due time adjust themselves. If they are ignored through short-sightedness, cowardice, or unwillingness to create new political precedents, then the last state of Germany will be worse than the first, and its influence will continue to be a disturbing and deteriorating influence, to the injury of Germany itself first, but not less to the hurt and loss of civilization.

It is both easy and natural to say, "Let the German peoples amend their own political arrangements!" But how are they to do it? Their constitutions were given to them as acts of grace, and without the ruler's consent there is no legislature in Germany, from the Imperial Diet downwards, which is able to alter its constitution by a single letter. There is the possibility of a revolution, but that is hardly an ally upon whose help responsible European statesmen would care to count, even were it not the fact that the spirit of revolution is foreign to the German character. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that without external pressure the constitutional changes which Germany requires if it is to be rid of the enemy of its peace and ours may and probably will be indefinitely deferred. Hence the words which Blücher wrote, after the fall of Napoleon in 1814, contain for us to-day a salutary and an urgent warning:

"May the fruits reaped by the swords of the army not be destroyed by the pens of the Ministers."

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